



هنا من الأخبار

THE INDEPENDENT

Tuesday 3 February 1998 45p (IR50p) No 3,524

Branson win puts lottery bosses in dock

Future management of the National Lottery was thrown into doubt last night after a High Court jury decided that an attempt was made to bribe Richard Branson by a rival bidding to win the lottery contract.

Andrew Buncombe reports.

At the end of a three-week libel case in the High Court, Guy Snowden, head of the American company GTEch, immediately resigned as a director of Camelot and it was announced that there would be a full investigation into the bribery attempt and the damaging fallout. Many at Westminster believe there should be a fundamental overhaul of the way the lottery is run.

Mr Snowden, whose company provides all the computer equipment for Camelot, which runs the National Lottery, was in effect found guilty of trying to bribe Mr Branson to get him to drop his bid to run a no-profit lottery during a now notorious lunch in September 1993.



Guy Snowden: 'Distressing two-year ordeal'

Mr Branson, 47, said after the hearing that the public's faith in the lottery would only be restored if a full investigation into the matter was carried out. He also called on Peter Davis, the head of Oflot, to consider his position and said it would be "incredible" if he did not resign. "We came to the High Court to ask a jury to adjudicate," said the clearly delighted Virgin boss.

Last night as the fallout from the case threatened to spread, Culture Secretary Chris Smith said he would personally be monitoring the situation. "It is right that Guy Snowden should resign immediately in the light of the jury's verdict," he said.

Sources close to the minister said he was deeply concerned about what had happened and that he was demanding Oflot, the lottery watchdog, carry out a full inquiry. Mr Branson said later in a statement: "I believe the faith

of the British public can only be fully restored by the appointment of a new Director General of Oflot, with immediate effect, as a first step to restoring the credibility of the lottery and, in the meantime, Peter Davis should consider his position very carefully.

"During the course of the trial it emerged that Peter Davis, who awarded the lottery to GTEch and Camelot, had serious reservations about GTEch from day one, despite the fact that I had been assured by him that they were a fit and proper organisation to be involved in the UK National Lottery. This action has clearly demonstrated that such a notion was nonsense from the start."

In a typically ebullient gesture, he said he would donate his damages of £100,000 to "those smaller charities who had lost out as a result of the lottery".

Mr Davis, who was called as a witness and said he could not remember Mr Branson ever mentioning an alleged bribe to him, said last night he had written to Camelot demanding action, including the "termination" of Mr Snowden's involvement in the lottery.

"I have been in contact with the Chairman of Camelot Group plc to specify the areas in which I consider action necessary, and to say that I expect action to be put in hand within 24 hours," he said.

He said he would not be demanding Mr Snowden resign as chairman of GTEch Corporation, or that GTEch divest itself of its 22.5 per cent shareholding in Camelot. He said there was nothing to suggest Camelot would continue its role of lottery operator.

He also denied his own position was at risk. "My veracity was not questioned in the court, I'm going to continue to do the job that's given to me by the Lottery Act."

Mr Branson had sued Mr Snowden and GTEch after he dismissed as false the entrepreneur's claim that the American had tried to bribe him. Mr Snowden had countersued over the original allegation, made on BBC TV in December 1993.

Mr Snowden, 52, said he was extremely disappointed by the result but that he was considering an appeal. He said he had resigned from Camelot and GTEch UK but that he could see no reason why GTEch should not continue to be part of Camelot, of which it currently holds 22.5 per cent.

He added: "This has been a distressing two-year ordeal and a fight against the word of one of Britain's most popular and well known figures."

Last night Camelot insisted the case had no implications for the operation of the lottery.

Bribe bombshell, page 5



Moment of triumph: Richard Branson outside the High Court with his wife, father and sisters after the verdict

Photograph: Brian Harris

US and Russia split on Iraq strikes

Russia warned the West against launching air strikes in Iraq, and tried to broker a diplomatic deal. But Britain and America shrugged off its warnings. Steve Crowshaw and Anthony Bevins report.

Harrier jump jets left their base at Yeovilton to join the aircraft carrier *Illustrator* in the Mediterranean.

The Russian Foreign Minister, Yevgeny Primakov, said that "diplomatic efforts should be continued and may bear fruit". He warned that the situation was "acquiring a more and more menacing character."

Russia has been keen to find the hint of a concession. A spokesman in Moscow said that in conversation with President Boris Yeltsin's envoy, President Hussein declared his readiness to allow the United Nations to monitor eight new sites and to meet the chief UN arms inspector, Richard Butler.

The US Defense Secretary, William Cohen, insisted, however, that the Iraqi proposal was "not a solution", and Britain seemed equally cautious. The Prime Minister's spokesman was sceptical about President

Hussein's offer, saying there were many more than eight sites that UN monitors required access to.

Answering an emergency Commons question, the Foreign Secretary, Robin Cook, argued: "Without effective [United Nations] monitoring, Iraq could produce enough anthrax every week to fill two missile warheads and could, within weeks, be producing a large volume of nerve gas."

Apparently backing up their caution, Iraq later said that it had offered no concessions. Previous confrontations have often shown Iraq to be ready to say one thing, then do another, in pursuit of brinkmanship.

Mr Cook told MPs that the Government was taking the lead in the UN Security Council, with a draft resolution seeking to ensure that UN monitors were given full and unrestricted access to suspected weapons

sites. Mr Cook argued: "If we want a diplomatic solution, we have to demonstrate that we are prepared to go for military force if need be."

President Yeltsin spoke on the telephone to President Bill Clinton, as the efforts to seek a diplomatic solution continued. France has also made it clear that it opposes military action. A French spokesman said that President Jacques Chirac was sending a "very firm" message to Saddam Hussein with a senior foreign ministry official who left for Baghdad yesterday.

Washington has also met resistance from the Arab world. The US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, met the Saudi heir apparent, Crown Prince Abdullah, at a desert encampment outside Riyadh, on a tour to drum up support for possible air strikes. She denied suggestions she was getting no Arab support during her tour.

As the signs of imminent conflict mounted, Israel went into panic mode. Patriot missiles were deployed in the southern Negev desert, Israelis were issued gas masks, and the government asked to buy millions of doses of antidotes from the United States. Israel was a target of Iraqi Scud missile strikes in the 1991 Gulf War.

US holds key, page 14

TELEVISION The Eye, page 12
CROSSWORDS Page 22
The Eye, page 9
WEATHER The Eye, page 10

Web address: <http://www.independent.co.uk>

Death Row plea as hope fades

Karla Faye Tucker, the woman on death row in Texas who is due to be executed today, made a last-minute effort to win a reprieve yesterday. But her chances seemed to be fading.

In a letter to the Texas Governor, George Bush, she said: "I am seeking you to commute my sentence and allow me to pay society back by helping others. I can't bring back the lives I took. But I can, if I am allowed, help save lives. That is the only real restitution I can give."

Tucker, who admits slaying two people in Houston in 1983 with a hammer and pickaxe, would be the first woman to be executed in Texas since the Civil War. Nationally, only one woman has been put to death since the Supreme Court lifted the ban on executions in 1976.

She put in an order for a final meal of a banana, a peach and a tossed salad after the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles voted last night to deny her appeal for last-minute clemency.

The board's vote virtually erases any hope Tucker and supporters around the world, from Pope John Paul II to members of the European Parliament, have of preventing her walk to the death chamber in Huntsville jail today. She is scheduled to be dispatched by injection soon after midnight British time.

The decision now binds the hands of Texas Governor, Mr Bush, the son of the former president, who can only grant a 30-day reprieve. Tucker's lawyers have, however, placed an appeal before the US Supreme Court in Washington, which last night had taken no action.

— David Osborne, Huntsville
Sister of mercy, page 12

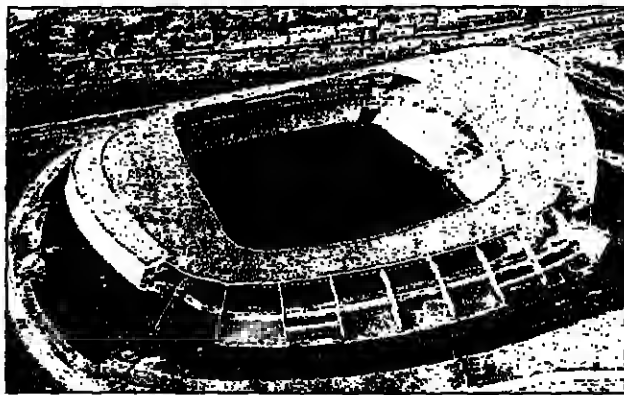
Frozen rugby pitch becomes explosive issue

The France-England rugby match on Saturday is threatened by the state of the controversial pitch at the brand new, £270m showpiece World Cup stadium just outside Paris.

If the game is postponed, it would be the second England international in a matter of days — following the first cricket Test in Jamaica — to be called off because of pitch problems.

The turf at the Stade de France — close to unplayable when France played Spain at soccer last week — is frozen to a depth of five centimetres, with further frost on the way.

Environmental groups have been warning for months that the pitch could be threatened by seeping chemical and gases from the heavily polluted former gasworks site on which the stadium was constructed. Jackie Bonnemains, of the pressure group Robin des Bois (Robin Hood), said yesterday that the



Frozen asset: The Stade de France, beset by problems

threat of gas seepage explained why no underground heating system was installed. "According to our information, an electric heating system of this kind could have reacted with the gases and caused an explosion."

The cold weather may not be the only problem. The pitch was laid last autumn and has

been giving concern for weeks. It is understood that the world football body Fifa asked for the turf to be relaid after last week's inaugural game.

The French news agency AFP reported yesterday that the France-England game was "heavily threatened". This was later rejected as an "over-

dramatisation" by the French Rugby Federation and the consortium which runs the stadium.

The stadium organisers said the pitch would be covered by a huge blanket and warm air would be pumped underneath to unfreeze the turf. The pitch would be "perfectly operational", not just for Saturday but for the England training session promised for Thursday.

Serious questions remained, however, over why had the pitch not been covered during the severe frost at the weekend? Why had the state-of-the-art stadium not been equipped with under-soil heating?

The game cannot be switched to the Parc des Princes, its old venue, because 80,000 tickets have been sold and the Parc only holds 55,000. If the pitch is unplayable, Mr Ronoulet said, the game would be postponed until the spring.

— John Lichfield, Paris

TODAY'S NEWS

Bone marrow appeal

Alastair Campbell, Tony Blair's press secretary, has made an emotional appeal for bone marrow donors to save a nine-year-old girl. She is suffering from the leukaemia that killed both her grandmother and father. Page 3

Loyalists' unholy war

The Loyalist Volunteer Force, which recently killed five Catholics, warned it would wage "an unholy war against the nationalist community" following a republican threat against the family of a loyalist killed by the IRA. Page 4

War poet a 'lunatic'

Lawrence of Arabia invented tales of his valour and Siegfried Sassoon's protests about the Western Front slaughter were the work of a lunatic, according to First World War files released yesterday. Page 6

PEOPLE LIFE NEWS

COLUMN ONE

Cold comfort for all on Groundhog Day

The Seer of Seers, Sage of Sages, Prognosticator of Prognosticators and Weather Prophet Extraordinary has spoken: Punxsatawney Phil, the American groundhog revered by thousands, popped out of his burrow on Gobbler's Knob, saw his own shadow and declared that winter will persist for another six weeks.

Yesterday was Groundhog Day, when thousands of Americans make their annual pilgrimage to the small Pennsylvania town of Punxsatawney to see Phil coaxed out of his luxury, electrically-heated hilltop burrow to make his prediction. Around 20,000 people were there when the groundhog emerged at 7.20am and his loyal supporters insist, despite strong evidence to the contrary, that he is always right. In fact, he predicts another six weeks of winter nine times out of 10, and he six out of 10 of these predictions are correct. The tradition has been maintained since 1886, and nearly led to



Bill Cooper, president of the Groundhog Club, hears Phil's prediction. Photograph: Reuters

war between Punxsatawney and the State of California in 1953. In that year, the good folk of the town presented a "Royal Groundhog Couple", named Elizabeth and Philip, to the Los Angeles Griffith Park Zoo. The California Department of Agriculture, however, declared the young groundhogs to be "agricultural pests" and ordered them destroyed. Despite a national protest, the six-week-old baby groundhogs were lined up and shot. Or, as a Beverly Hills newspaper reported: "Two little groundhogs dropped their shadows and picked up eternity's wings."

All citizens of California were promptly denied membership of the Punxsatawney Groundhog Club and there was talk of forming a militia to march on California. The bodies of Elizabeth and Philip were brought home for a dignified burial.

Despite having been a national institution for over a century, Punxsatawney Phil only became a true celebrity after the release of Harold Ramis's 1993 film *Groundhog Day* in which Bill Murray played the part of a weatherman doomed to repeat the same day in his life over and over again.

Groundhogs apart, there seems to be little excitement in Punxsatawney. The town's homepage on the World Wide Web has a list of "Interesting Facts About Punxsatawney" of which the most interesting seems to be that it is near towns called Panic, Desire and Harmony. Our own newspaper database contains just one news story about the town that does not mention the word "groundhog". Its headline: "Trapped lumberjack cuts off leg with penknife." There must be another good story concerning the origin of the place name "Gobbler's Knob" but that seems to be lost in antiquity. It certainly predates the time of Bill Clinton's presidency.

— William Hartston
Weather Page, The Eye, page 10

FREE TICKETS TO 'THE ICE STORM'

See *The Ice Storm* for FREE tonight. We have secured a number of tickets to exclusive screenings. To get a pair of tickets simply ring the number below, and once you receive confirmation on the telephone arrive at the stated time.



Cinema	Seats	times	telephone
Showcase Bristol	200	7.00pm for 7.30pm	0930 564 981
Showcase Glasgow	200	7.00pm for 7.30pm	0930 564 982
Showcase Leeds	200	7.00pm for 7.30pm	0930 564 983
Showcase Manchester	200	7.00pm for 7.30pm	0930 564 990
Showcase Nottingham	200	7.00pm for 7.30pm	0930 564 991
Showcase Reading	200	7.00pm for 7.30pm	0930 564 992
Showcase Stockton	200	7.00pm for 7.30pm	0930 564 993

Calls cost 50p per minute at all times, lines open at 9am and will close at midday. Normal Newspaper Publishing Plc rules apply.

PEOPLE



Nicholas Payne: Leaves Covent Garden at a time of crisis for the homeless company

Royal Opera director defects to the ENO

Nicholas Payne, director of the Royal Opera has defected to the English National Opera, where he will become general director. The move, predicted three weeks ago in *The Independent*, will be a blow to the Royal Opera House, only just recovering from a damning report by a House of Commons select committee. Indeed, the new ROH chairman, Sir Colin Southgate, said when he was appointed last month that he would not consider it to be a great start for him if Mr Payne left. Mr Payne had previously shown his disillusionment at Covent Garden, publicly describing remarks by former chairman Lord Chladin about the opera company's finances as "bollocks".

Mr Payne, 53, has been director of the Royal Opera company for five years. He is the first person to move from Covent Garden to the nearby London Coliseum at such a senior level, formerly ran Opera North and at the ENO will be reunited with music director Paul Daniel, who worked with him at Opera North. Mr Payne will be anxious that the inquiry being led by Sir Richard Eyre will rule out the option of the English National Opera sharing Covent Garden with the Royal Opera, as suggested by Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture.

Mr Payne said yesterday: "English National

Opera is a superb company, playing a unique role in the popularising of opera in this country. I am honoured to be asked to lead the company, in partnership with Paul Daniel, during these challenging times. None the less, it will be a wrench to leave Covent Garden, where I have been privileged to work with great artists and wonderful colleagues. All of them have my thanks and best wishes for the journey ahead."

Mr Daniel added: "Nicholas Payne is a formidable champion of opera and has an inspiring reputation for adventure mixed with huge experience. I am delighted that he and I can resume the creative partnership we enjoyed at Opera North, and I warmly welcome him to ENO."

John Baker, chairman of the ENO board, said: "Nicholas Payne's outstanding career, both as director of the Royal Opera and prior to that as general administrator of Opera North, will bring to ENO a high level of proven ability. Working together with Paul Daniel, he will lead the company forward at a time of great change in the arts."

Mr Payne will take up his appointment in the summer. Until then Mr Daniel will continue to lead the company.

— David Lister, Arts News Editor

Sara draws back the Internet curtains for all

Fans of the Internet site JennyCam, featuring 24-hour live pictures from inside an American woman's bedroom, can now tune into a British version — SaraCam.

The site, launched yesterday by cable station Bravo, will send a new picture every three seconds from the bedroom of East London actress Sara, who despite opening her bedroom to the world is unwilling to reveal her surname. Viewers of JennyCam say watching Jenny sleep, tidy her

room and chat to her friends can be surprisingly addictive.

Viewers of the Internet station Bravo were invited to vote for a British Jenny from a short-list of three young women. Almost 50 per cent decided Sara's boudoir was the one they would most like to spy on.

James Matheson, spokesman for Bravo, denied SaraCam's audience would be dominated by dirty old men. "It'll be more like a real soap opera," he said. "Sara has a great personality and

she's bound to be throwing loads of parties."

"On the other hand there will probably be quite a lot of time when all you will be able to see is Sara's cat asleep on her bed or Sara brushing her hair."

The camera can be turned off or moved away if Sara wants a little privacy. And while the self-confessed show-off said yesterday she is unshockable, it is understood no nudity will be involved.

— Rosa Prince

UPDATE

MONETARY UNION

Hostility to single currency falls

The public's hostility to British membership of the single currency is at its lowest this decade, according to a new poll for Salomon Smith Barney, the investment bank. With 32 per cent saying they would vote to join if a referendum were held tomorrow, and 52 per cent saying they would vote against, the balance of minus 19 per cent (after rounding) against membership is the lowest since Mori started conducting this opinion survey in November 1991.

The detailed results show a sharp swing since November in favour of joining amongst Labour and Liberal Democrat voters, people at both the very top and very bottom of the income scale, and amongst 25- to 44-year-olds. Asked about their intentions if the Government was strongly urging membership, the proportion saying they would vote no in a referendum fell below a half, and the balance opposed dropped to minus 9 per cent. "Europe" has ranked amongst the top five voter concerns every month for the past year, and is on a par with the more usual priorities such as unemployment and education.

According to the report from the bank, the financial markets regard Britain's entry into the single currency by 2003 to be a near-certainty.

— Diane Coyle, Economics Editor

ANIMAL CRUELTY

Circus animals starved and beaten

Secret cameras have filmed lions, tigers and elephants being beaten, starved and confined in tiny cages at circuses across Britain. The recordings, taken at five circuses over an 18-month period, reveal more than 400 hours of abuse against circus animals. At the Mary Chipperfield Circus, three elephants were kept inside a barn for three months. Tembo, a 12-year-old African elephant, had a tent pole broken over him and another elephant, Opel, was filmed screaming as she was beaten to the ground. Truly, a baby chimpanzee was kicked, hit and beaten across the face with a riding crop when she would not return to her cage. At the Circus Harlequin, tigers and lions were hit with iron bars and jabbed in the mouth until they bled.

The cameras were hidden by the charity Animal Defenders who called yesterday for a ban on performing animals. They want circuses to be brought under the Zoo Licensing Act to make it easier to prosecute abusers.

Jan Creamer, director of Animal Defenders, said: "In more than 20 years of studying the use of animals and campaigning for animal protection, this is the most appalling abuse I have ever seen."

Elton John, who is supporting the campaign to ban animals from circuses, said: "The animal circus is a relic of a bygone era and has no place as a form of modern entertainment."

— Rosa Prince



CONTENTS

News	3-15	Obituaries	22
Features	16, 17	Business	23-27
Health	18	Sport	28-32
Visual arts	19	Crosswords	32: The Eye, 9
Leader, letters	20	Weather	The Eye, 10
Comment	21	TV and Radio	The Eye, 11, 12

TOURIST RATES

Australia (dollars)	2.30	Japan (yen)	204.15
Austria (schillings)	20.40	Malta (lira)	0.63
Belgium (francs)	59.92	Netherlands (guilders)	3.27
Canada (\$)	2.31	Norway (kroner)	12.11
Cyprus (pounds)	0.85	Portugal (escudos)	295.79
Denmark (kroner)	11.13	Spain (pesetas)	245.37
Finland (markka)	8.86	South Africa (rand)	7.72
France (francs)	9.72	Sweden (kroner)	12.97
Germany (marks)	2.91	Switzerland (francs)	2.36
Greece (drachmes)	461.61	Turkey (lira)	339.667
Hong Kong (\$)	12.24	US (\$)	1.59
Ireland (pounds)	1.16		
Italy (lira)	2.577		

Source: Thomas Cook
Rates for indication purposes only

7.30 FOR 8

by Chris Priestley ZITS

by Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman



RAC cover from just £39



- Membership covers you as the driver or passenger in any car, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year
- Average call out time of just 40 minutes
- Our highly trained patrols repair 81% of breakdowns
- You can tailor your cover to suit your individual requirements
- It's easy to join: call now & pay by credit, debit or charge card, or by Direct Debit instalments

For instant cover

0800 029 029

RAC

Quoting IND036

Phone lines open Mon-Fri 8am-6pm, Sat 9am-5pm, Sun 10am-4pm. Free calls (0800 029 029) offer cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer, is not transferable and is only available to new Members. Cover costs from £39 if paying by continuous payment method.



www.rac.co.uk

هكذا من الأصل

PM's aide in desperate plea to save cancer girl

Alastair Campbell, the Prime Minister's press secretary, has made an emotional appeal for bone marrow donors to save the life of nine-year-old Ellie Merritt.

Louise Jury reports on the story of the little girl who is suffering from the leukaemia that killed both her grandmother and her father, John, one of Mr Campbell's closest friends.

Ellie Merritt is desperately ill in London's Great Ormond Street Hospital. She just lies there, Alastair Campbell said, with her red hair thinning and her bright smile waning just as her father once lay in ward B3 at Hammersmith hospital.

Her life could be saved by a bone marrow transplant, but her mother, Lindsay Nicholson, and her little sister, Hope, are not compatible and the chances of matching with an unrelated donor could be as remote as one in 100,000.

John Merritt, who worked for the *Daily Mirror* and the *Observer*, died aged 35 in 1992 while waiting for a suitable donor. He was a highly respected reporter whose memorable articles including exposing the barbaric conditions of Greek mental pa-

tients and even an NHS scandal from his hospital bed.

Driven by that memory, Ms Nicholson, 41, has launched a campaign in *Prima*, the monthly magazine she edits, to encourage more bone marrow donors. Mr Campbell has added his voice to those who cannot bear to see tragedy strike again. He said the only time Mr Merritt ever cried or asked "why me?" was when he spoke of his daughter.

Mr Campbell appealed to people to volunteer to be donors, whose tissue type details are kept on the database of the Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Trust. "It may save Ellie, it may save someone else. Either way, the memory of a great talent merits a response," he said.

Ms Nicholson said: "To have lost my husband and for Ellie to have lost her father and to be plunged into this now is unimaginable. For me, the overwhelming thought is that there is someone out there who could have matched John and we didn't find them. There is someone who could save Ellie and we don't know who they are, but we have to try to reach that person somehow..."

A spokeswoman for the Anthony Nolan Bone Marrow Trust said it received nearly 10,000 calls last week after Ms Nicholson first spoke out about her daughter's plight.

To see whether you are a suitable donor, contact the trust on 0990 111533.

Family gene that can bring tragedy

One of the most frightening aspects of cancer is its unpredictability. In most cases, it strikes out of the blue where there is no history and no apparent cause. But in one in ten cases, there is a family link, suggesting a genetic predisposition.

Professor Mel Greaves, of the Institute of Cancer Research, said: "We have two families under treatment at the Royal Marsden hospital with leukaemia in three generations. If it were in two, it could be coincidence but when it is in three that is stretching it. Given the genetic predisposition in common cancers such as breast and colon it would be surprising if leukaemia were an exception. The difference with

leukaemia is that we don't know what the gene is."

The strength of the genetic predisposition can be gauged from the number of cases within the broader family. If there are many siblings in each generation and only one or two are affected it is likely to be weak requiring an environmental trigger to cause the cancer. But some genes are so strongly predisposing, there is no need for an environmental trigger.

A further clue comes from the age at diagnosis. If it is younger in each succeeding generation, as in the Merritt case, it is suggestive of inherited predisposition.

— Jeremy Laurence
Health Editor



Lindsay Nicholson and Ellie, who needs a bone marrow transplant. Photograph: Jayne Russell

Now paranormal becomes the norm

More men believe in the paranormal than in God, and two thirds of people give credence to psychic powers. Kathy Marks looks for some answers.

Nigel Briscoe is an intelligent, articulate man who earns his living as a deep sea diver in the offshore oil industry. Fifteen years ago, he visited Rita Rogers, the medium who was later consulted by Diana, Princess of Wales.

"It started out as a bit of a joke, but Rita blew my socks off," he said. "She said that she didn't know what my job was, but she could see me surrounded by water. She didn't know me from Adam, but she knew everything about me."

Mr Briscoe found her predictions uncannily accurate. "I saw Rita once after I had been on a diving course in Falmouth," he said. "She said to me: 'You've just met a girl called Jean.' She was absolutely right."

He is among a growing number of Britons who are throwing incredulity to the winds and turning to people who would once have been dismissed as cranks: mediums, spiritualists, faith healers and fortune tellers.

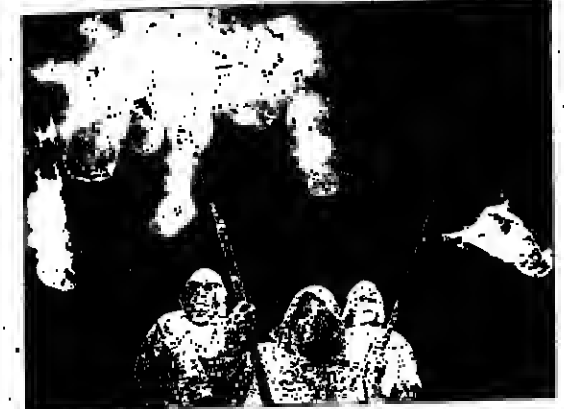
The conclusions of the survey, conducted for the *Daily Mail*, are startling. Sixty-three per cent of people said that they believe in the paranormal — phenomena that cannot be explained by science. Sixty-four per cent said they believe in psychic powers; 38 per cent in ghosts; 34 per cent in poltergeists; 29 per

cent in alien visitations. There are whole raft of theories about this explosion of interest in the inexplicable — pre-millennium angst, the Age of Aquarius, Princess Diana's visits to Ms Rogers, programmes such as *The X-Files*.

Mediums are divided about what draws them to the profession. "Everyone is psychic; you just have to learn how to use your powers," said Lucinda June, a ghost-hunter. "You're either born with the gift, or you're not," said Barbara King, who is also Rita Rogers' sister.

It is easy to scoff, but both Ms June and Ms King have been called in by police on murder investigations. And the church need not despair. Nigel Briscoe, through his experiences with mediums, has become a born-again Christian.

Search for meaning in a weird and wonderful world



You could always blame the millennium. Belief in the paranormal is up and in God is down in, according to the latest survey. Almost half of twentysomethings believe that ghosts exist. Yet they are considerably less likely to believe in the Almighty.

Although the figures, in an ICM poll of 1,000 people each interviewed for two hours, published in the *Daily Mail* yesterday, show that the public are more likely to believe in preternatural activities, they also reveal a diminishing basis for such beliefs. The statistics show that those claiming to have had direct experience of weird phenomena have decreased, according to Professor Richard Wiseman of the University of Hertfordshire, one of the academic world's leading sceptical experts on the paranormal.

It is a historical fact that a resurgence of apocalyptic beliefs characterise the turn of a century but most particularly a millennium. The decline of orthodox religion appears only to have nurtured this, with the blossoming of a New

Age-ism which places personal fulfilment at the heart of spirituality. For example, celebrating the Celtic Fire Festival (pictured) at the beginning of Spring.

You could blame the media. Our television screens are afflicted by a rash of strange-but-true programmes which, lacking any pretence at investigative rigour, present the paranormal as entertainment.

But a number of factors combine here. The scientific method may promote rationalism but science has created miracle technologies which seem little short of magic — for example an Internet which allows musicians in different countries to play along in the same song.

The survey's definition of "paranormal" is so loose that, as psychologist Susan Blackmore of the University of the West of England points out, it would cover any physical phenomena that we don't yet fully understand — like consciousness. It confuses the paranormal with the supernatural and jumps God in with spoon-bending, telepathy and

psychokinesis — if they exist — are still phenomena. They are facts about the world. By contrast a supernatural event, like the Resurrection, is something which transforms human experience. A Jesus beamed up to heaven would be a bit of sci-fi paranormal; a resurrected Christ who transforms the life of those who believe constitutes a heightening or fulfilment of the natural — it alters how we read the world now. It is about searching for meaning in the events of the world.

A medium who tells us that the spirits of the dead try to get in touch with their living relatives makes dying sound like going to Australia. The transcendent view is that death is the end of our life story and that resurrection is another order of being.

It was a distinction which G K Chesterton understood well enough. "When people cease to believe in something," he once said, "they do not believe in nothing; they believe in anything."

— Paul Valley
Photograph: Paula Soloway/LNP

Announcing the arrival of KLMuk.



KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and Air UK have created a new airline for the United Kingdom — KLM uk. We serve airports all around the country, which means there's bound to be one close to home. So when you fly with KLM uk, you fly with ease — from any one of 18 airports to over 400 worldwide destinations via Amsterdam. Or on any of our routes around the UK or Europe. To make a reservation, call us on 0990 074 074 or 0990 750 900. Alternatively visit our website at www.klmuk.com or contact your local travel agent. Now that KLM uk has arrived, taking off is effortless.

From all over the UK, to all over the world. **KLM uk**



Aberdeen • Belfast • Birmingham • Bristol • Cardiff • East Midlands • Edinburgh • Glasgow • Guernsey • Humberside • Inverness • Jersey • Leeds Bradford • London City, Heathrow and Stansted • Manchester • Newcastle • Norwich • Southampton • Teeside

Loyalists threaten 'unholy war' against nationalists

Although there have been no sectarian killings in Northern Ireland in recent days, a number of death-threats have again raised tension, writes David McKittrick, Ireland Correspondent.

Threats and counter-threats filled the air yesterday as the Loyalist Volunteer Force, which recently killed five Catholics, said it would wage "an unholy war against the nationalist community." It was responding to a republican threat against the family of Billy Wright, the loyalist leader killed by the Irish National Liberation Army just after Christmas.

There have also been possibly unrelated threats against a unionist councillor in Londonderry and against Protestant workmen in the south Armagh area. While the status of the threats is difficult to assess,

they have raised tension. An RUC spokesman said some threats might be mischievous, but others could be real.

Although no killings have been carried out in recent days, the violence which left eight dead in December and January has left its mark. Last week an LVF statement that it was suspending attacks on "ordinary Catholics" was seen as progress of a sort, but yesterday's statement was full of renewed menace. Security sources confirmed police had passed warnings of death-threats a week ago to the Wright family, who live in Portadown, Co Armagh. Wright's father, David, who has made clear his opposition to violence and described killings in retaliation for his son's death as abhorrent, said the family was taking the matter seriously.

The LVF said in its statement: "If republicans do not come out and deny these claims... the LVF will take these threats seriously. If republicans do not come out and issue

this statement of denial within the next 12 hours, the LVF will unleash an unholy war against the nationalist community. These type of sick threats against the late Billy Wright's family will not be tolerated."

The INLA, which killed Wright, quickly let it be known the threats did not come from them. Elsewhere in Co Armagh, road-gritting has been suspended in some areas because of a threat purporting to come from the "Catholic Reaction Force," a cover-name occasionally used in the past by the IRA. This threatened the lives of Protestants driving road-gritting vehicles.

A spokesman for the GMB union said: "These are men working on their own on dark roads in the early hours, and it's threatening enough in those conditions without having to worry about a threat from some paramilitary source." Northern Ireland environment minister Lord Dubs said he was very concerned: "Clearly I can't dis-

miss it as an idle threat. I don't want to send them into situations which are dangerous."

In Londonderry, Ulster Unionist councillor Andrew Davidson said he had gone into hiding after being told by police he was one of three prominent Protestants whose names could be on a death-list. Ministers are planning to soften unionist opposition to new legislation on parades by placing restrictions on protesters as well as marchers. Last night the Northern Ireland minister Adam Ingram published an amendment to the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Bill demanding that protesters give two weeks' notice in writing to the RUC. It means groups wanting to oppose parades must give 28 days' notice of their intentions. Mr Ingram is also expected to table an amendment forcing protesters to comply with a code of conduct which it already imposes on marchers.

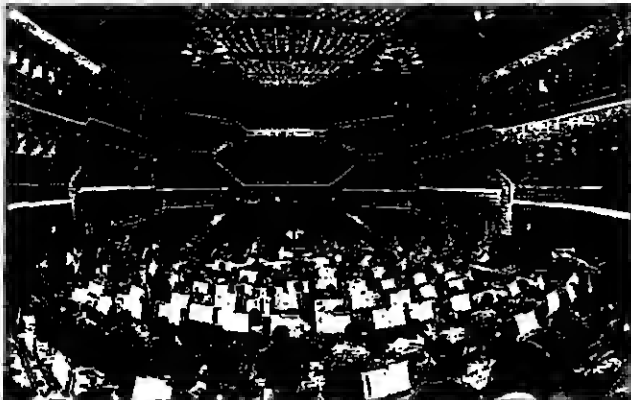
Bankrupt Halle Orchestra may have to close unless rescuer is found

Manchester's world-renowned Halle Orchestra is just days away from collapse it was revealed yesterday. One of the country's most respected and revered cultural groups is effectively bankrupt.

Accountants will tell the Halle Concert Society board members tomorrow that, with cumulative debts of more than £1m, it has reached the limits of its bank overdraft.

Now the Halle, founded by Charles Halle 140 years ago and brought to international fame by Freeman of Manchester, Sir John Barbirolli, is expected to report a trading loss this year.

A damning investigation carried out by accountants KPMG says the Halle is doomed unless



The Halle Orchestra in rehearsals. Photograph: News Team

a financial rescue package can be swiftly assembled. The cash crisis has climaxed despite the orchestra moving into the state-of-the-art £42m Bridgewater

Hall and concert attendances soaring by one-third. Sources blame the Halle's dire straits on a lack of financial control and suggested the board should go.

Extra help from the public sector funds - chiefly the Arts Council, Manchester City Council and other Greater Manchester authorities - is unlikely to be forthcoming before fundamental changes in management.

The only avenue open for the struggling musicians appears to be a loan from the Halle's endowment trust and, in the long term, a public appeal. One insider criticised the Halle Concert Society's "archaic" structure.

The accountants KPMG are understood to have condemned the management's "general lack of control" and failure to develop a strategy on which to base decisions.



Pharaoh style: One of Zandra Rhodes' Secrets of the Nile collection in the Manchester Museum's ancient Egyptian costume exhibition, opening today. Photograph: David Rose

Call to scrap unruly order

Government plans to deal with bad neighbours could breach the European Convention on Human Rights, according to academic lawyers who say the "blunderbuss" scheme should be scrapped.

They say proposals for anti-social behaviour orders (ASBOs) under the Crime and Disorder Bill could be the most "insidious attack on civil liberties in this century". The orders give powers for local authorities and the police to take out civil law orders against anti-social behaviour, whose breach could result in up to five years in jail.

Ministers want to clamp down on the behaviour of disruptive neighbours. But in an article for *Criminal Justice*, leading academics say the proposals pose a serious risk to human rights.

Michael Streever
Legal Affairs Correspondent

Police hunt shuts M6

Armed police hunting a gunman in a stolen van who left a 70-mile trail of terror had to shut a motorway for two hours yesterday.

A 29-year-old man from Huddersfield, West Yorkshire was eventually arrested after giving himself up to officers on the M6 in Cumbria. He was being questioned at Kendal police station last night.

The van was driven north out of Manchester on the southbound carriageway of the M6 and hit two other vehicles. No one was hurt.

On a mission

Paddy Ashdown was the guest last night of a family living on a rundown estate in Newcastle upon Tyne who have survived on benefits.

The Liberal Democrat leader said his visit was a fact-finding mission and he was expecting to meet local people and visit a social club. "I am hoping to find out how the people of the North-east are facing up to their problems, particularly unemployment which blights so many lives."

'Church rape'

A Roman Catholic priest, accused of sexually abusing six children, raped one victim after hearing her confession, a court heard. Fr John Lloyd, 57, regularly assaulted the nine-year-old and did the same to altar boys, it was claimed.

The alleged offences date to the early 1970s, when he was an assistant near Pontypridd, Mid Glamorgan.

Fr Lloyd denies four charges of rape and 17 of indecent assault involving four girls and two boys.

Injury payout

A woman who became "happy-go-lucky" after suffering mysterious brain damage, yesterday accepted £225,000 in settlement of her compensation claim against a hospital.

The High Court in London was told that Lynne Vassilata, 37, of Sutton, Surrey, experienced a personality change - including difficulties coping with money - after an operation under a general anaesthetic at Kingston Hospital 14 years ago. The hospital did not admit liability.

Free use of every fax machine in the world for two months.

Faxminder from BT gives you one single number that's assigned to you, not to any particular fax machine. Which means you can pick up your faxes from any machine you like.

That's because, no matter where you are in the world, any fax sent to your Faxminder number is stored confidentially until you're ready to read it. So wherever you

find a fax machine, your faxes can find you. Too good to be true?

Well, try it for yourself - the rental's free. And at the end of two months you can simply sign up or sign off.

Freefone 0800 800855
for a
free two month trial.
www.faxminder.bt.com

FREE USE TERMS: The connection fee of £33.50 inc. VAT and the first two months' rental are free. This special offer is valid on subscriptions from 26/01/98 to 26/04/98. Monthly rental after the trial period is £5.88 inc. VAT. Calls to Faxminder may not be available from a small number of other networks both in the UK and overseas and some private switched services. Calls to Faxminder are charged at BT's "1" rate. Calls to Faxminder from non-BT fixed lines and from mobile phones will be charged at the appropriate rates listed by the network operator. Calls to your Faxminder number are charged at Local rate within the UK. There are additional charges for international use and for receiving faxes abroad. You must inform us 7 days prior to the end of the trial period if you wish to stop using Faxminder. If you do not, monthly rental will become automatically payable from month 3. For quality control purposes we may from time to time randomly tape calls.

WE'LL GIVE YOU 361 DAYS OFF (YOU'LL NEED IT)

You'll only do two weekends plus a fortnight's annual exercise. Doesn't sound like much, does it? You wait.

Your body will ache. Not to mention your head. In a TA Specialist Unit you are expected to use old skills, learn new ones and still do regular training.

Wages? Same rate as a regular, with up to £900 a p.a. tax-free bonus. You'll have time to spend it. Interested?

For an information pack about TA Specialist Units, send this coupon to: The Territorial Army, Freeport 4335, Bristol BS1 3XX. Or call 0845 300 333 quoting ref 3490 SPSC.

NAME SURNAME
ADDRESS
POSTCODE

AGE 17-24 ☐ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65+ ☐
Please tick if you have one of the skills below or want to learn one. If not, tick the test box, because there are other jobs available.
LGV driver ☐ Travel manager ☐ Electrician ☐ Labourer ☐ Bookie ☐
Mechanic ☐ Radio operator ☐ Chef ☐ Forklift driver ☐
None of these, but I am interested in joining a TA Specialist Unit ☐
Other applicants with relevant skills may be considered.
Minimum yearly commitment is 2 weekends and a 2-week camp.
The TA is committed to Equal Opportunities.
<http://www.army.mil>

A little can mean so much

When you are weary of pain and fearful of the unknown, little things can mean so much. At St. Joseph's Hospice, we are dedicated to doing everything within our power to give comfort, support and peace of mind to those with terminal illnesses and their loved ones. We sincerely thank all of you who have given so generously in the past and look forward to your continuing support. Every donation, however small, makes a difference and is greatly appreciated by the Sisters and those in their care.

Sister Superior
ST. JOSEPH'S HOSPICE
MARK ST. LONDON W6 6BA
(0181) 748 1100

Salmon, chilled chardonnay and then the bribe bombshell

NatWest
More than just a bank

Credit is only available to persons aged 18 or over, and is subject to status and conditions. Written quotations are available on request from National Westminster Bank Plc, Registered Office: 41 Lathbury, London EC2P 2BP, or from any NatWest branch. If you borrow £7,100 over 36 months at the rate of **12.9% APR**, you would pay 36 monthly repayments of £236.48. The total amount payable would be £8,513.28. If you borrow £3,000 over 36 months at **15.9% APR**, you would pay 36 monthly repayments of £103.77. The total amount payable would be £3,735.72. These examples include the 1% APR discount. Ref no: 50188

Files reveal Great War secrets of British literary heroes



Rudyard Kipling: Refused to believe his son had been killed

Authorities believed Sassoon was a lunatic and TE Lawrence was a charlatan



Desert hero: TE Lawrence fought bravely for the Bedouin tribes against Ottoman rule (right) but lied about his Army record



Photographs: Hulton Getty

Files released by the Public Records Office yesterday shed new light on the private lives of three of the most renowned British literary

figures of this century. Kim Sengupta and John Crossland report.

Lawrence of Arabia invented tales of his valour and helped

to create his own myth; Rudyard Kipling refused to believe his son was killed in action; and the authorities had a ready explanation for Siegfried Sassoon's impassioned protests about the slaughter on the Western Front

— he was a lunatic, and not fit to be trusted with men's lives. These accounts were among 216,795 files from the First World War released by the Public Record Office yesterday. The papers contain the first

version of Sassoon's pacifist manifesto "Act of Willful Defiance of Military Authority", in which he declared he could no longer see any justification for the slaughter in the trenches. What was once described as a

fight for liberty, he said, had become a war of aggression. "I can no longer be a party to prolong these sufferings for ends which I believe to be evil and unjust". The treatise could have put him before a firing squad. In-

stead, the War Office, perplexed as to how a decorated officer from the right background could be so disloyal, summoned him to a medical board and sent him to the Craig Lockhart Hospital for the treatment of psychiatric disorders in Scotland, the place where much of Pat Barker's novel *Regeneration* is set. After assessment a letter in his file stated: "Lieutenant Sassoon was undoubtedly the author, but when he wrote it he was a lunatic".

The manifesto was found stuffed into a luggage rack on a train between Birmingham and Preston, and handed to Lord Derby, the Minister for War, in January 1918. It is believed Sassoon dumped it there several months earlier on the way to his medical board.

Grave doubts about Sassoon's mental state continued among the military hierarchy. Brigadier George Cockerill, deputy director of military intelligence and one of the founders of *MILS*, wrote to *The Nation* magazine, which had printed a poem by Sassoon: "If Lt Sassoon is now writing such verse... it would appear his mind is still in chaos and he is not fit to be trusted with men's lives".

Lawrence of Arabia, according to the papers, credited himself with military service which was almost certainly fictitious. He had told his official biographer, David Garnett, that he had run away from home to serve with the Royal Artillery in 1906 or 1907 before he started at Oxford University.

In 1938, three years after Lawrence's death in a motor-bike accident, an inquiry by the military historian Basil Liddell Hart led to a check by the War Office, and the discovery there was no sign of such service.

Accusations of embellishment also came in the Lawrence file over the nomination for a Victoria Cross and a secret reconnaissance mission he was supposed to have made to Deraa in Syria, the place a year later, he was allegedly flogged and raped by a Turkish officer. Commenting on the declaration of his reconnaissance mission, a memo says: "Do you consider he is deserving of the latter honour (the VC)? I do not think so." The file later noted that no reference should be made to the Deraa reconnaissance.

The records also shows the War Office grudgingly allowed Lawrence to carry the rank of Lt Colonel when he re-enlisted as an ordinary aircraftman, contrary to military regulation, because it feared adverse publicity if it appeared his rank had been stripped off him.

Rudyard Kipling refused to believe that his son had died in the Battle of Loos in 1915. According to Army records, John Kipling was killed in action at the battle on 27 September 1915.

His father did not accept the official version for four years, and started an investigation of his own. In September 1916 he wrote to the War Office that his research indicated his son had been left behind at a building on the battlefield.

The letter said: "All the information I have had is that he was wounded and left behind at Puits 14, at the battle of Loos. I have interviewed a great many people and heard from many others and can find none who saw him killed. And his wound, being a leg wound, would be more disabling than fatal".

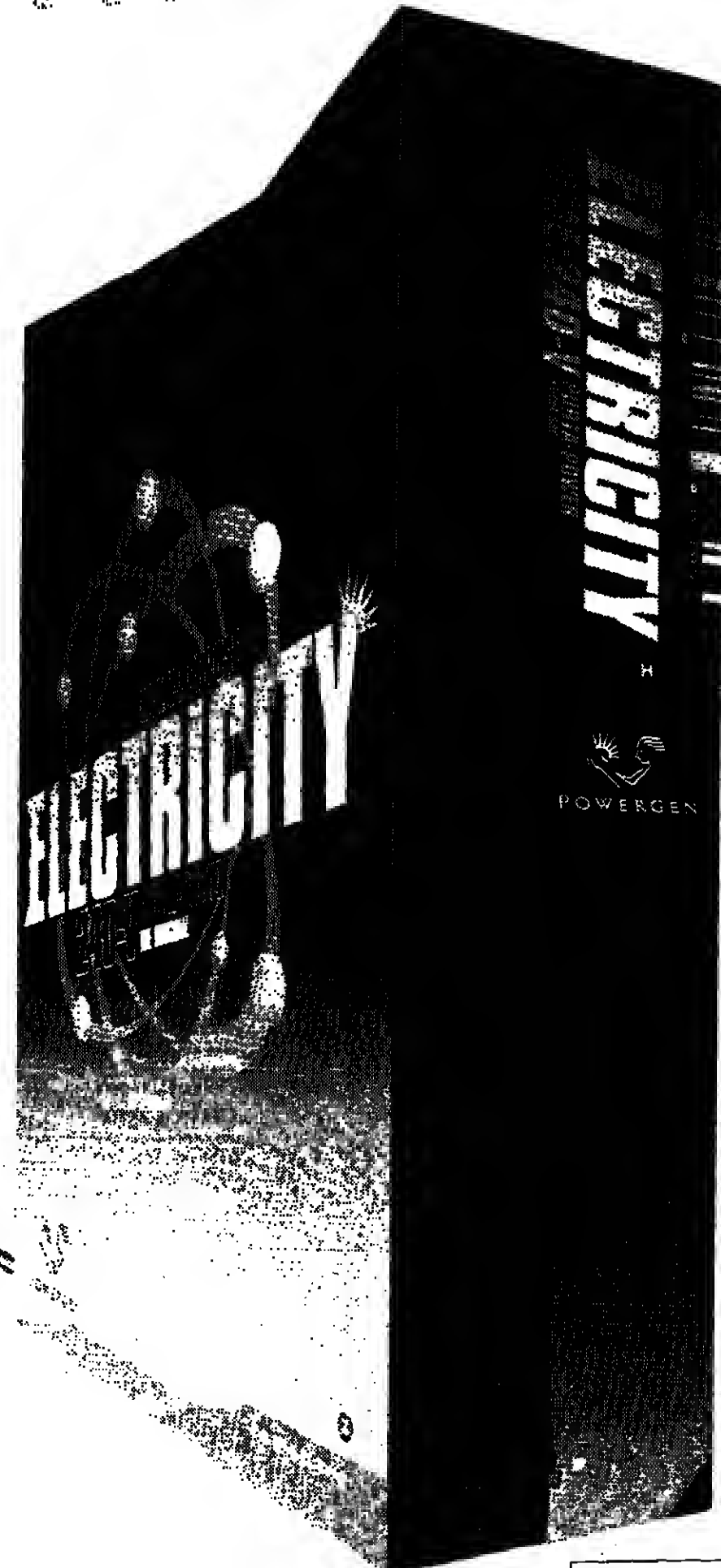
The War Office responded that in view of Kipling's feelings on the matter it would not officially accept his son's death. Kipling continued his search after the war until finally accepting his loss in 1919. Writing through his solicitors, he said: "The search in Germany... has not revealed any trace of him".

Literary legacy, page 17

IF ONLY OUR
PRODUCT WASN'T
INVISIBLE

YOU'D SEE IT IN LEADING
BUSINESSES ALL OVER BRITAIN.

If you could buy electricity the way you buy other products, you wouldn't just see the PowerGen brand in households all over the country. You'd see it in thousands of workplaces too. Because PowerGen is the number one supplier of electricity for businesses in Britain. The manufacturers of all sorts of products, from appliances to cars, telephones to tools, biscuits to building materials, depend on our expertise for the enormous amounts of electricity they require to keep the wheels of industry turning. And to keep them turning for years to come. If it wasn't for us, it wouldn't just be our product that would be invisible. Thousands of others would be too. For more information about PowerGen, please call our information line on 08451 29 30 40. Or you can visit our Web Site on www.pgen.com



THE POWER BEHIND POWER

THE INDEPENDENT

WIN A ROMANTIC BREAK AT

MILLENNIUM
HOTELS & RESORTS



Treat your Valentine to a very special weekend in London staying at one of our fabulous four star deluxe Millennium hotels. All are located in central London, close to the capital's main attractions, and offer a wide range of facilities.

The Millennium Britannia Mayfair is ideal to enjoy London's theatres and nightlife. The Millennium Chelsea Knightsbridge is situated in London's fashionable Sloane Street, and close to major international department stores, ideal to spoil each other with expensive presents. The Millennium Gloucester and Millennium Bailey's in Kensington are close to the major museums as well as Kensington Palace and Hyde Park.

Millennium Hotels & Resorts has teamed up with The Independent to offer one lucky couple a romantic weekend in London - staying two nights at the Millennium hotel of your choice, with full English breakfast and a complimentary meal for two in the hotel restaurant. The winners will

also receive a box of chocolates and a bottle of champagne to celebrate.

The break must be taken before 31 March 1998, only subject to availability.

To enter this competition dial the number below, answer the following question on line and leave your name and full address.

Q: Name the 'Son of Venus' - who would cause people to fall in love by piercing them with one of his magic arrows?

Call 0930 563027

Those not lucky enough to win can benefit from special rates at any Millennium or Copthorne hotel in the UK or Europe. To book, call reservations on 0645 455445 and quote The Independent Superpower. London's Millennium hotels start at £110 per room per night + Copthorne hotels at £39 per room per night. A limited number of rooms are allocated to this offer - availability usually weekends.

Calls cost 50p per minute at all times. Winner picked at random after draw closes 3rd February 1998. Usual Newspaper Publishing rules apply. Editor's decision is final.

كافأ من الأدب



Another brick in the wall: Per Kirkeby at the Tate yesterday. Right: Carl Andre's controversial 1972 exhibit

Main photograph: Stefan Rousseau

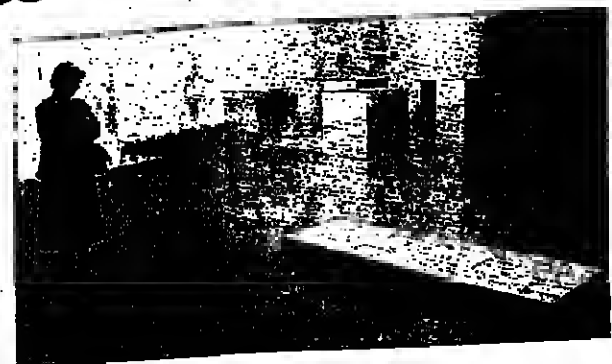
Now the Tate Gallery unveils an even bigger pile of bricks

The Tate Gallery in London yesterday revived memories of a quarter of a century ago by unveiling its latest work - a four-metre high brick wall.

The 30-metre long structure, made up of four separate sections through which visitors are encouraged to wander, was commissioned by the gallery.

In 1972, critics were outraged when the Tate bought *Equivalent VIII* - popularly known as "the pile of bricks" - by Carl Andre, although that sculpture was much smaller in scale and lay on the floor.

The Danish artist behind the latest work, Per Kirkeby, 59, who has created more than 100 brick structures around Europe, yesterday defended his sculpture and said the choice of materials did not mean it was not artistic. "People say bricks are not art, bricks are bricks."



But then paintings are just made of paint," he said. "Materials are just materials, but you can use them in a way that what comes out of it is art."

The latest work is a series of four walls which run down the centre of one gallery. On the walls of the gallery are a number of his paintings and the idea is for the viewer to emerge from between the bricks to get a different perspective of the

paintings, rather than stand directly in front of them. Exhibition curator Sean Rainbird said: "Essentially what it does is make you look at the paintings in a certain way."

The work took a team of up to eight bricklayers two weeks to complete, using 20,000 bricks donated by manufacturers Ibstock. The exhibition also features a collection of the artist's bronze casts.

New scan will spare women from cancer surgery

Women with breast cancer could be spared unnecessary surgery as a result of the development of a new technique for detecting how far the disease has spread. Jeremy Laurance, Health Editor, reports.

A new scanning technique invented by scientists from the Imperial Cancer Research Fund can show whether cancer in the breast has spread to the lymph nodes under the arm.

The technique will allow surgeons to tell women in advance how extensive surgery to remove the cancer will have to be. Currently, the only way to detect the spread is to surgically remove the lymph nodes and examine them in the laboratory. That means that women with no cancer in their lymph nodes have unnecessary treatment.

A pilot study conducted on 29 women at St Bartholomew's hospital, London, showed the technique was 90 per cent correct in predicting cancer spread. Rob Carpenter, consultant surgeon at St Bartholomew's breast unit, said: "We are extremely encouraged by the results. They mean that in future we will be able to let patients know what to expect from their breast cancer operation and help them deal with it more effectively."

The technique involves injecting radioactive markers designed to home in on, and stick to, cancer cells. Pictures of the lymph nodes are taken twice over 24 hours using a gamma

camera and the two images are compared by a computer which indicates the probability of cancer being present.

There are 35,000 new cases of breast cancer each year and almost all affected women have surgery to remove the lump. The more advanced the cancer the greater the likelihood of spread to the lymph nodes. In the most extreme cases this results in a radical mastectomy in which the breast and all the underlying tissue including the lymph nodes is removed.

The need for radical surgery has declined as improved detection and screening has led to earlier diagnosis. The researchers say that as breast cancers are detected earlier the need for a scanning technique to determine whether the disease has spread to the lymph nodes will grow because in an increasing number of cases the nodes will be unaffected.

The research team, led by Professor Keith Britton, head of the ICRF Nuclear Medicine Unit, is now looking at the possibility of injecting a tiny amount of the radioactive marker by the tumour and using a probe to check the lymph nodes.

Professor Britton said: "If the node is positive it can be removed and examined in the laboratory to double check if cancer is present. That way we can tell women in advance just how extensive their breast cancer operation is going to be."

Results of the pilot study were announced at the launch of a fundraising drive by ICRF and Macmillan Cancer Relief in association with General Accident, the insurance company, expected to raise £200,000.

Consultant misread 100 smear tests

A consultant pathologist has been removed from cervical screening after misreading the slides of 180 women. More than 100 women with abnormal cervical smears have been recalled by the hospital in Lincoln after the consultant wrongly reported them as normal.

The errors, disclosed yesterday, will fuel concern about the cervical screening programme after it emerged on Friday that eight women died after their smears were misread in the Kent and Canterbury hospital scandal.

However, experts said the latest problem, at Lincoln County Hospital, demonstrated how new quality checks on the service were working.

The women's smears had already been through an initial screen which had identified them as suspect and they had been referred to the consultant for an expert opinion. After figures showed the consultant was reporting fewer women with

moderate to severe abnormalities than expected a review of all 317 smears he had reported as normal over the past five years was carried out. That revealed 180 had been misread.

The hospital announced yesterday that three women had already received further treatment and a further 34 have been invited for a repeat smear. The remaining 112 have been invited for colposcopy - direct examination of the cervix using a special microscope.

Sarah Skelton, director of nursing at the hospital, said the consultant was on sick leave for an unrelated reason and would not be returning to cervical screening. "There is no suggestion or evidence that our primary screening processes which cover the vast majority of slides have any deficiencies," she said, adding that the review had been triggered by new quality standards.

— Jeremy Laurance
Health Editor

OPEN
9am-9am

BARCLAYCARD TRAVEL SERVICE
0870 840 8000

24 hours a day, you can sort out your travel problems with one phone call. And when you want to book your next holiday, we'll do all the legwork. Packages, holidays and more, at the best price, guaranteed.

don't put it off put it on **BARCLAYCARD**

<http://www.barclaycard.co.uk> For full written details of Barclaycard services and conditions, call 0800 001020.

Landowners threaten legal action if ramblers are granted the right to roam

Scouting blood in their campaign to kill off any right to roam, landowners yesterday unveiled new ideas for improving access to the countryside on their own terms while hitting at court action if the Government legislates.

The package from the Country Landowners' Association, including a register of the thousands of acres where landowners "permit" the public to walk

without granting rights, is intended to put further pressure on Tony Blair.

Within the next three weeks, the Government is expected to publish its consultation paper on granting greater public access to open country. Michael Meacher, the environment minister, submitted the paper to No10 in the autumn. But Mr Blair, lobbied hard by well-connected landowners, has delayed publication, provoking fears he was

abandoning a manifesto commitment.

Ramblers suspect members of the Royal Family, among the country's largest landowners, may have made known their opposition to a right to roam.

Ian MacNicol, president of the CLA, said yesterday that managed voluntary access remained the best way forward. "It is a more cost-effective, more practical and more responsive way to deliver that man-

ifesto commitment." According to a study carried out for the CLA at Manchester University, landowners would be able to claim £50m a year in compensation if the original proposal for a right to roam over mountain, moor and common land in England and Wales was enacted.

Mr Meacher has rejected large payouts, but Mr MacNicol said yesterday that if a right to roam was granted without com-

pensation the issue might be taken to the European Court of Human Rights. "Intuitively, we feel the costs will be less for voluntary access," he said.

As well as county access registers, giving information on permitted access rarely shown on Ordnance Survey maps, the CLA is also pioneering "access audits" of farms and estates to identify where owners might be falling short of existing legal requirements

and possible improvements.

The Ramblers' Association said that while the CLA indulged in "PR fantasies", public rights of way were routinely and illegally blocked. Among examples cited, were paths on land owned by the Duke of Buccleugh in Northamptonshire and Duke of Westminster in Cheshire - two of the country's wealthiest aristocrats.

— Stephen Goodwin, *Heritage Correspondent*

The Queen prepared to go public with the Royal accounts

The Queen is prepared to make a significant break with the past, and give Parliament direct access to accounts of the Royal Household, 'The Independent' can reveal. Kim Sengupta reports on a new effort at public accountability at the Palace.

The Queen has nothing to hide about her finances; indeed the way the Royal household carried out savings could be a lesson for many a public body, according to her senior advisers. And, to prove its point, the Palace has privately told the Government it would welcome direct scrutiny of its accounts by the Commons Public Accounts Committee.

The issue has long been a source of acrimony. In a recent report, the PAC claimed the Royal household was inefficient and secretive, and MPs blamed the Queen for being reluctant to offer access to the books - charges denied by the Palace.

Successive governments have resisted demands by MPs to have direct access to the accounts on the grounds that "it would be incompatible with the Royal household's unique

constitutional position". However, MPs have become increasingly vociferous in their demand to see how £20m of taxpayers' money is being spent.

David Davis, the new PAC chairman, says the auditor general should have immediate access to all Royal household accounts, including the Civil List and the transport accounts. The former Tory Foreign Office minister's initiative has come as a surprise to the Labour members of the committee, who have been campaigning unsuccessfully under previous chairmen for full access.

At present, the Queen submits information on the Royal finances to ministers whose departments would then decide what the auditors look at. There is also an annual report to MPs on the cost of official trips by the Royal Family.

Both Whitehall and Royal sources say it is the government departments who are uneasy about direct access rather than the Royal Family.

One Palace source said: "The Royal Family want to have transparency over their finances, and we think that is what the public want as well. The Queen would have no objection to direct scrutiny by the PAC or the Auditor General. The last thing we want is an impression that there is something

to hide. We already have an independent external audit, and we are pleased with the savings we have carried out since we assumed the responsibility for the maintenance of the occupied Royal palaces in 1991."

Along with offering greater openness, the Palace is also ready to be combative over what it perceives as unfair accusations. The critical PAC report is seen as negative and out of date. The Committee criticised low rents charged for Royal apartments. But Royal sources point out that since August 1994, all staff and pensioners using the apartments have had a rent rise of 16.5 per cent.

The grant-in-aid expenditure by the Royal Household has fallen from £20,541,000 to £20,440,000 from 1995 to 1996, and is intended to be reduced to £15m in two years' time.

As part of a cost efficiency campaign, energy conservation measures have, says the Palace, resulted in savings of 9 per cent on electricity, 32 per cent on gas, and 61 per cent on water.

Much of this is said to be through the efforts of Michael Peat, formerly a partner in the accountancy firm KPMG, the Keeper of the Privy Purse, who has also brought in a performance related pay structure for some employees of the Royal Family.



Apple appealing: Tony Banks, the Minister for Sport, and Annabel Croft, the television presenter and former tennis player, in a peeling race to launch the sixth annual Bramley apple week at the Houses of Parliament yesterday, in aid of the homeless charity Crisis. Photograph: RUI XAVIER

Dobson cleared of appointing 'yes men'

Frank Dobson has been cleared of appointing Labour "yes men" to the new NHS trust boards. Colin Brown reports.

Allies of the Secretary of State for Health said last night that he had been cleared of an alleged scandal over the appointment of NHS hospital chiefs, following claims that he sacked local Tories to make way for Labour placemen.

Sir Leonard Peach, the Commissioner for Public Appointments, found no evidence to support the main complaint made against Mr Dobson's handling of the appointments by John Maples, the Tory spokesman on health.

The commissioner said in a letter to Mr Maples that Mr Dobson told Sir Leonard about his wish to ensure the boards of

health authorities and hospital trusts were more representative of the local communities in which they served by appointing more councillors from local authorities.

"My response was that he was free to do so, subject to complying with my Code of Practice ... On the evidence available to me, I believe that the Secretary of State's public pronouncements and communications have followed this line," said Sir Leonard. However, he is testing the quality of the appointments with a rolling programme of audits on the way they were handled in the eight NHS regions.

The Tories accused Mr Dobson of carrying out a purge of Tory supporters from the NHS boards, and replacing them with Labour stooges. But the minister's friends said he had sent a letter to all Tory MPs asking them to submit names, and only a third replied. Only four members of the Shadow Cabinet responded.

Those who did not reply included the former Health Secretary, Stephen Dorrell and Mr Maples. Mr Maples claimed Sir Len's letter showed that the appointments were being investigated, but Mr Dobson said: "It is absolutely astonishing that John Maples should repeat

the allegations which he knows to be untrue from Sir Len Peach. It takes sheer brass neck to cite Sir Len as corroboration for the discredited smears they are putting round."

Meanwhile, Mr Dobson has been promised by Tony Blair a real-terms increase in spending on the NHS to match the Government's celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the health service.

The Health Secretary has won the Prime Minister's backing for a boost in his budget and an extra £2bn could be added to the NHS spending this year after the Chancellor's comprehensive review of spending.

Clear your financial commitments and pay less each month

Outstanding commitment	Interest Rate	Monthly Amount Repayable (36 months)	Total Amount Repayable
Barclaycard	22.9% APR	£75.14	£2,705.04
Barclays Bank Loan	18.9% APR	£53.81	£1,937.16
House of Fraser Store Card	28.4% APR	£59.85	£2,154.60
Total amount owed		£188.80	£6,796.80
Amount borrowed with a Marks & Spencer Personal Loan over 36 months	15.9% APR	£172.95	£6,226.20

Total saving over 36 months: £570.60

Source: Moneyfacts January 1998

A Marks & Spencer Personal Loan could help you clear all your financial commitments and save money each month. We could help you clear all your outstanding credit and store card bills, loans and any other unpaid bills - leaving you with one affordable and easily manageable monthly payment.

You can apply for between £500 and £10,000 and choose the repayment period that suits you - from 12 to 84 months. And because the rates are fixed, your monthly repayments will never rise.

What's more, there is no administration or arrangement fee, no security to provide and no interview to attend. And eligible Marks & Spencer Account Card customers can claim a special 1% APR discount.

It costs nothing to apply for a Marks & Spencer Personal Loan. When you call, our trained sales staff will help with all

aspects of your application, including our reassuring Personal Loan Protection.

So take more control of your finances and save money with a Marks & Spencer Personal Loan. Call today on 0800 363 464.

Call free to apply on
0800 363 464
quoting reference IDAS

Lines open Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 8.30 p.m.
and Saturday 8 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

MARKS & SPENCER
FINANCIAL SERVICES

Written quotations available on request from Marks & Spencer Financial Services Limited, Kings Meadow, Chester Business Park, Chester CH99 9PB.
Marks & Spencer Financial Services Limited, Registered Office: Michael House, Baker Street, London W1A 1DN.
Registered in England No. 1772585. A subsidiary of Marks & Spencer plc.

SWIFTCALL 0800 769 0800

www.swiftcall.com

TALK IS CHEAP!



low cost international calls	Swiftcall	B.T.	SAVE
USA	8p	24p	67%
India	50p	£1.20	58%
Japan	20p	77p	71%
OZ	18p	49p	63%
Hong Kong	27p	58p	53%
Ireland	10p	23p	56%

Call us today free on 0800 769 0800 for details on fantastic savings to hundreds of other destinations and how to open your pre-paid account.

Call 1800 794 381 if you live in Ireland.
1800 838 5005 if you live in the USA



Study for a BA or BSc degree

To broaden your interests or develop your career, the Open University offers over 150 courses you can choose from to build your own BA or BSc degree programme. They cover arts, science, social science, computing, technology, modern languages, mathematics, business management, English law, education and health and social welfare. If you are 18 or over and resident in the European Union, you're eligible. No previous qualifications are required.

Through OU supported Open Learning
Our unique method of teaching lets you study wherever you live and in your own time. The Open University comes to you with specially written texts, audio and visual cassettes, TV and radio programmes and, for some courses, computer software. You also receive support from your personal tutor and Regional Centre.

Admissions are on a first-come first-served basis - so fill in the coupon or phone NOW.

Send to: The Open University, PO Box 625, Milton Keynes, MK9 6AA.
☐ Please send me a copy of the Courses, Diplomas and BA/BSc degrees prospectus.

☐ I have contacted the OU before.

Title Initials Surname

Address

Postcode

Tel. Date of birth 19

Call the OU Hotline (24 hours) on

0870 9000 301

Pigeon lads reprieved by mystery benefactor

Ryhope Colliery closed in the 1960s, but the "pigeon lads" who grow vegetables and keep birds on the allotments in this historical part of Sunderland still remember how to dig themselves in.

But for a last-minute reprieve, the 20 ex-miners, some of them now in their 80s, would have faced the bailiffs this weekend rather than give up their plots to developers. "Swampy wouldn't have had a look-in with these blokes," said Fraser Kemp, the local MP who has been supporting their campaign. "They've spent their whole lives digging holes in the ground."

Although the men were offered alternative sites after the North Eastern Co-operative Society sold the allotments in 1996, they were determined to stay on the plots which have been in some of their families since the turn of the century.

Last Monday, five days before the 31 January eviction date fell due, word arrived that an anonymous benefactor had bought the land for the men. The donor is a local businessman, but they do not know his name.

John Reid, secretary of the Ryhope Allotment Holders, said he had no idea that help was at hand until a letter from the developer arrived.

"I don't care who it is as long as everything's right. We were talking about picket lines and about stopping there in case they came at night. Thankfully it hasn't come to that," he said.

— Fran Abrams



Reprieve: Maurice Surtees, a pigeon fancier, and his birds at his loft in Ryhope, Sunderland

Photograph: Will Walker

Allotment holders dig in to protect their land

A Parliamentary committee will investigate the plight of allotment gardeners this month as their plots are eaten up in the rush to build new housing. Enthusiasts hope MPs can persuade ministers to act but, writes Fran Abrams, there has been little sign that this will happen.

Almost 50 of England's 7,800 allotment sites have been sold off to developers with ministers' blessing since last May, it emerged last week. In some areas al-

lotment holders are "digging in" to protect their land as the bulldozers prepare to move in.

Although the 1925 Allotments Act protects the plots, set up so that working people could grow their own food, in reality it has done little for them.

All plans to sell off "statutory" allotments must be approved by ministers. But Angela Eagle, the environment minister, revealed in a Parliamentary written answer that she had approved the sale of 47 sites since last May and had refused none.

In fact, under both Labour and the Tories it has been almost unheard of for ministers to turn down allotment sales. Geoff Stokes, secretary of the National

Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners, said he could only remember two occasions on which a request had been refused, out of hundreds over the past decade.

He said that although interest had declined over the years, food scares had led to new interest among young people. But councils looking for sites for an estimated 4.4 million homes needed between 1990 and 2015 are eyeing the prime land, often on the outskirts of existing housing. The society will present evidence to the Commons Environment Committee this month.

"Because of its location this land is actually needed not just for allotment purposes but for its ecological value to

the community," Mr Stokes said. Although gardeners are offered alternatives when the developers move in, many of them are pensioners and do not want to move.

The society has presented the Parliamentary inquiry with a survey of allotments just completed for it by Professor David Crouch of Anglia Polytechnic University. It shows that since 1970 the number of individual plots has dwindled from 530,000 to less than 300,000. The loss of "non-statutory" plots which are either temporary or privately owned has been even sharper. In 1970 just half the total number were statutory, compared with three-quarters today.

Tories devise strategy to save the green belt

The Tory party has come up with a new idea for boosting house building in urban areas as it launches a campaign to save England's green belts from urban sprawl, says Nicholas Schoon, Environment Correspondent.

The Conservative environment spokesman Tim Yeo MP said yesterday that house-building firms should be able to earn themselves credits for siting new homes within towns and cities, through conversions and by reclaiming derelict "brown-field" sites.

Only those companies which had built up credits would be granted planning permission to build homes on the restricted number of greenfield sites which councils did make available for development. The party believes such a system would make firms invest more effort in searching out opportunities for urban development.

"We think this is a better idea than the tax on greenfield development which the Labour Government says it is considering," said Mr Yeo. "Such a tax would just legitimise building in the green belts."

Yesterday, William Hague, the Conservative leader, visited the site of the proposed green-belt development west of Stevenage, in Hertfordshire, where up to 1,000 homes could

be built after the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, decided not to intervene in the county council's structure plan.

Sir Norman Fowler, Conservative spokesman on the Environment, Transport and Regions, went to another green-belt site near Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, where Mr Prescott has intervened to allow industrial development. Mr Yeo, meanwhile, visited a site near Horsham, which could have homes built on it. West Sussex, County Council is taking Mr Prescott to the High Court for a judicial review hearing after his department intervened to add 12,800 homes to its structure plan.

The Tories see the threat to the countryside as one of their biggest opportunities for rebuilding support in the wake of the election defeat.

The party's other policy for boosting house building in urban areas is to alter the statutory planning guidance handed down from government to councils. The guidance the Tories advocate for housing would set the same kind of "sequential test" which proposals for out-of-town shopping and leisure centres have to undergo. In essence, developers have to prove they have searched exhaustively for a suitable site in the urban area before permission can be granted.

Mr Hague said he advocated two-thirds of all new housing development taking place in towns and cities. "Not only will this protect the countryside, but it will also breathe new life into our towns and cities."

THE
FASTEST
ANIMAL
ON
EARTH
USED
TO BE
THE
CHEETAH.



The Jaguar XK8's 4.0 litre V8 engine has variable cam phasing, to provide perfect torque whatever the engine's speed. Fast enough to make a 0-60 mph leap in just 6.4 seconds. Please call 0800 70 80 60 for information on Jaguar Cars and Jaguar Financial Services. Internet: www.jaguarcars.com

JAGUAR XK8
DON'T DREAM IT. DRIVE IT.

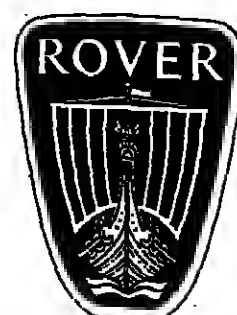


**WITH £12,350,
YOU CAN BUY
ANY ONE OF FIVE
SIMILAR CARS.**

**OR YOU CAN BUY
A ROVER 400.**

With £12,350, you'll find five cars that are much of a muchness, and one that's in a league of its own.

Good news if you're thinking of buying a Rover 400, and bad news if you've just bought one of the others. For more information call 0345 186 186, or visit www.rovercars.com.



CAR SHOWN ROVER 414.16v £12,350 ON THE ROAD. PRICE CORRECT AT TIME OF GOING TO PRESS. PRICE INCLUDES 12 MONTHS ROAD TAX, DELIVERY TO DEALER PREMISES AND NUMBER PLATES. SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY.

هكذا من الأصل

One pint drink limit will drive us to the wall, say country publicans

An automatic one-year ban for motorists drinking just one pint looks set to be introduced by the Government. Jason Bennett, Crime Correspondent, examines new proposals to reduce road deaths.

Newly qualified motorists and teenage drivers could have a special "alcohol-free" or extra low limit for a probationary period, it emerged yesterday.

Police are also expected to be given new powers to act on public tip-offs and lay traps for motorists leaving pub car parks.

The possible changes could form part of a package of measures aimed at cutting the number of deaths and serious injuries caused by drunk drivers.

While the Government intends to consult on the changes during the next three months, it became clear yesterday that Gavin Strang, transport minister, favours lowering the current limit from 80mg of alcohol per

100ml of blood (about two pints of beer) to 50 mg - the equivalent of about one pint, one unit of spirits or two glasses of wine. Breaching the lower limit would also be punishable with a minimum 12 month ban. It is estimated that lowering the limit could save about 50 lives a year - about a tenth of the current drink-related death toll.

An alternative is to give drivers caught at the higher 80mg a longer ban, but this looks unlikely. Instead more motorists who repeatedly offend or who have been drinking excessively - about half the people convicted are over twice the limit - would have stiffer penalties with a maximum of six months in jail.

The consultative document, "Combating Drink Driving: Next Steps", says that if a motorist has drunk between 50mg and 80mg, which is currently legal, they are up to 2.5 times more likely to be involved in an accident than if they were sober.

There were about 3,600 road deaths in Britain compared to around 850 homicides, says the document.

The gradual drop in road accidents appears to have levelled out with a hard core of young and middle aged men continuing to drink and drive.

While the police and doctors are in favour of reducing the limit to match France, the

Netherlands, Belgium, Greece and Finland, landlords in rural pubs are concerned that it could destroy their businesses.

Neil Hammons, landlord of The Fox, a 16th century hostelry in the village of Denchworth, Oxfordshire, said: "It's bound

to hit country pubs as people will not want to travel miles for just one pint."

His view was supported by Mike Ripley, of the Brewers and Licensed Retailers Association, who said: "Lowering the limit would be a disaster for country

pubs, shops and social life in country areas." Mr Strang replied: "I do not think 50mg is a draconian measure which will shut down rural pubs. You can still have a couple of shandies and a few soft drinks."

The drinks industry funded

watchdog, the Portman Group, yesterday cast doubt on the effectiveness of a lower limit, saying: "The stubborn criminals who cause most of the drink-drive deaths are already well over the present limit. They will not be stopped by a lower limit."

Pressure on petrol duty

The Chancellor is committed to increasing duty on petrol in his Budget on 17 March by around 6 per cent in real terms, which could add around 27p to a gallon of unleaded petrol.

But Gordon Brown is being urged to take tougher measures to curb car use as part of a package of "green taxes". The Chancellor is under pressure from the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution to raise petrol duty by at least 9 per cent above inflation, adding 37p to a gallon of unleaded petrol.

The Commission's report last September called for a "concerted campaign to change public attitudes to cars" and measures to double the price of motor fuel in real terms by 2005.

The Chancellor is also expected to raise the road tax by £5 to £155.

— Colin Brown

Just one for the road: The landlord of the Fox in Denchworth, Oxfordshire, says few will want to travel miles for a single drink. Photograph: John Lawrence

The perfect package.



NOKIA 6110

The Nokia 6110 is Nokia's smallest and lightest phone yet, offering outstanding operating times and a perfect combination of state of the art features in a stylish and sleek design. Owning one is like having a personal assistant wherever you go and the Profile function allows you to adjust the phone to suit your environment and lifestyle. But it's also designed for fun; the Nokia 6110 includes three games. It's everything you want in a mobile phone plus a few extras you might not expect. The Nokia 6110 is the perfect package. Call 0990 003110 today for a leaflet.

NOKIA
CONNECTING PEOPLE

Nokia is a registered trademark of Nokia Corporation, Finland.
Copyright © 1997, Nokia Mobile Phones Ltd. All rights reserved.

www.nokia.com

DAILY POEM

The Language Issue

By Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill
(translated from the Irish by Paul Muldoon)

*I place my hope on the water
in this little boat
of the language, the way a body might put
an infant*

*in a basket of intertwined
iris leaves,
its underside proofed
with bitumen and pitch,*

*then set the whole thing down amidst
the sedge
and bullrushes by the edge
of a river*

*only to have it borne hither and thither,
not knowing where it might end up;
in the lap, perhaps,
of some Pharaoh's daughter.*

Our Daily Poems today and tomorrow come from the latest batch of Poems on the Underground, which will appear in London Tube carriages from this week. The seventh edition of the *Poems on the Underground* anthology will soon be published in paperback by Cassell (£4.99). This poem first appeared in Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill's *Pharaoh's Daughter* (The Gallery Press).

Honey,
I shrunk the
car insurance!

Call the Motor Insurance Hotline now
to see if you can shrink yours.

0345 123 111

Please quote ref. NPA

Hill House Hammond

Over 200 branches nationwide

HEALTH INSURANCE

Low cost? ☒ YES!
Full cover? ☒ YES!

Call 0800 77 99 55
to find out more about Primicare, quoting ref M08775N6

Prime Health
A member of the Standard Life Group

Pay less for quality
health insurance.

The sister of mercy who sees hope in murderer's execution

Sister Helen Prejean has little hope that Karla Faye Tucker, the Texas death row inmate scheduled for execution today, will be spared. But, as she tells our correspondent, she hopes that her death will do some good by forcing Americans to think more deeply about the death penalty.

Sitting at her desk in her tiny New Orleans home, Sister Helen Prejean fingers a photograph that she fully expects to bring her deep sadness, and not a little anger, in the hours ahead. The picture is of her with the face of an attractive young woman resting on her shoulder smiling at the camera.

The other woman is Karla Faye Tucker, the murder convict who at 6pm, local time, is almost certain to be dispatched to her death by the state of Texas as punishment for a heinous double murder that she and a former boyfriend committed in Houston in 1983.

Tucker, 38, has never tried to deny the crime, which was committed with a hammer and a pickaxe. She has, however, been asking for clemency, a request that was yesterday unanimously rejected by the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles - leaving her just one last chance, the appeal that she

has before the United States Supreme Court.

The two women met at Gatesville prison, which houses Texas's death row inmates, two months ago. Last week, while on a speaking visit to Alaska, Sister Helen sent what she knew would be her last words to her in a postcard, with husky dogs pulling a sled on the front.

Sister Helen's message to Tucker was brief. "I just thanked her, thanked her for her life and thanked her for who she was."

These were more than words of spiritual comfort; the gratitude was genuine. Sister Helen, who in 14 years has become the US's best-known voice against capital punishment, believes that the case of Karla Faye Tucker, more than any other since the US Supreme Court reinstated the death chamber in 1976, will force people to think more seriously about state-sponsored killing.

Sister Helen has done more than anyone to get that process of reflection started. She is the nun who wrote the book *Dead Man Walking*, which three years ago was made into a hit film of the same name starring Susan Sarandon, as Sister Helen, and Sean Penn as a convict who is sent to the death chamber.

"What makes the death penalty possible is the non-identification of people; the abstraction, the removing of them. We don't see their faces. We dehumanise them like in any military operation."

But with Tucker, we know

her story, because she has told it to countless interviewers, on CNN's *Larry King* and on the *60 Minutes* programme. It is the story of a woman who admits to what she did but who has found God and now gives Christian counselling to others.

It has been a redemption that has convinced not just Sister Helen but even the conservative tele-evangelist, Pat Robertson, a supporter of the death penalty.

"Karla has been in front of the whole nation," the Sister explains, "and you're looking into the face of someone who is beautiful, reflective, obviously loving and so she poses

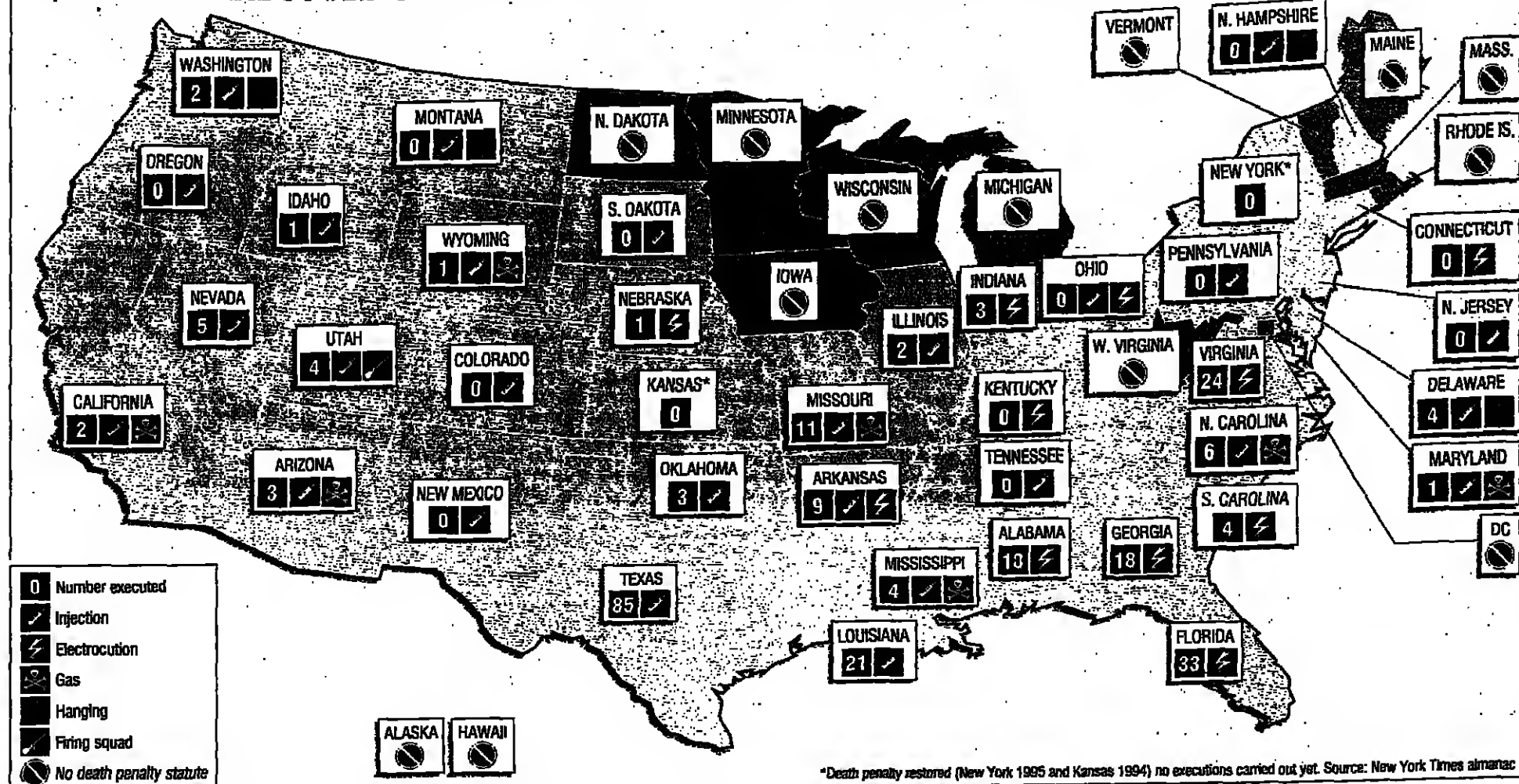
the moral question for us in a way that we have never had before. Yes, she's guilty, but will we only define her, will we freeze-frame her, in this worst act of her life?"

Therein lies a truth about the death penalty that the sister hopes Americans will begin to ponder.

"What they are saying is we don't care what you say, we're freeze-framing you in this act of murder. And then we freeze-frame ourselves as a society. And that's really an act of despair," Sister Helen said.

"Karla Faye exemplifies this important thing: human beings are more than the worst

PRISONERS EXECUTED SINCE REINTRODUCTION OF THE DEATH PENALTY IN 1977



Sister Helen Prejean: Feels gratitude towards Karla Tucker

NEWS SPORT WHAT'S ON FUN KNOWLEDGE MONEY SHOPPING TALK INTERNET

"This is a truly modern online service...delivering topical and relevant content."

"The integration between its own content and the web is seamless."

"LineOne is an ideal option for home users."

"For a first-time user, LineOne is a valuable introduction to the Net."

Before you choose an Internet service, check our references.

LineOne	15 stars
Compuserve	15 stars
AOL	12 stars
MSN	12 stars

Try LineOne and the Internet FREE. Call 0800 111 210.



It's what you want to know

Calls are charged at BT local rates. Different rates may apply to calls from non-BT networks.

Is there something *vital* missing from your home insurance?

Compare your home insurance policy with Legal & General's and you're bound to find a few gaps in your cover. Take a look below and you'll see we're included an impressive range of extra benefits for your peace of mind.

<p>ACCIDENTAL DAMAGE Cover for mirrors, fixed glass in furniture, TVs, hi-fi and video equipment. Can be extended to all contents.</p> <p>NEW FOR OLD No deduction is made for 'wear and tear', except for clothing more than two years old.</p> <p>STOLEN KEYS Up to £500 to replace locks.</p> <p>LOSS OF METREED WATER Up to £1,000.</p> <p>BUSINESS EQUIPMENT Business equipment such as computers, up to £3,000 in the home. Plus you can specify any items you want covered away from home.</p> <p>UP TO 20% NO-CLAIMS DISCOUNT Regardless of who you were previously insured with.</p> <p>BICYCLES In the home, covered up to £250 per cycle. Can also be extended to include 'away from home' cover.</p>	<p>ALTERNATIVE ACCOMMODATION Up to 20% of the sum insured, should you need to move out temporarily.</p> <p>FREEZER CONTENTS Up to £500.</p> <p>MONEY AT HOME Up to £500 automatic cover.</p> <p>LEGAL AND DOMESTIC HELPLINES Free legal advice or help finding a local tradesman, eg. for burst pipes.</p> <p>TEMPORARY COVER INCREASE 10% increase in sum insured over Christmas and family weddings.</p> <p>30 DAYS GRACE To register high-value items up to £2,500.</p> <p>JURY SERVICE LOSS OF EARNINGS Up to £2,000 towards expenses or loss of earnings.</p> <p>CHILD CARE Provides you with a qualified carer for up to two days if your child or regular child minder falls ill and you need help (optional).</p>
---	---

A free pen with every quote

0800 32 42 52

61242P



Home Insurance cover is only available in England, Scotland and Wales and is subject to acceptance by underwriters.

French get peek at all the presidents' women

The French taboo on media coverage of the sex lives of politicians lay shattered into a hundred fascinating pieces yesterday. The magazine *Marianne*, irritated by the priggish French coverage of Bill Clinton's travails, tore open the lace curtains on 40 years of hidden affairs of state. John Lichfield reports.

If France were the United States, it would have lost its last three presidents - Mitterrand, Giscard and Pompidou - to sex scandals. Even the present incumbent, Jacques Chirac, would have had some Clinton-like explaining to do about his pre-presidential, private life.

According to the news magazine *Marianne* - a serious, but deliberately unconventional publication, not a scandal sheet, President Chirac's extra-marital conquests have included the Italian actress, Claudia Cardinale. Valéry Giscard d'Estaing had an affair while president, with, among others, the actress Sylvia Kristel (who made her name in the erotic classic *Emmanuelle*). François Mitterrand's activities were too numerous to list in full but included an affair with the singer Dalida. Georges Pompidou had an illegitimate son.

The magazine says all these facts - and more - were common knowledge at the time but never written about openly in the French press. This was partly from fear of prosecution under French privacy laws (*Marianne* is deliberately courting this risk). But there is also a long-standing journalistic convention that it is "healthier" and more "adult" to ignore such things.

In France, much scorn has been poured on the American media for its pursuit of the last titillating detail of the Monica Lewinsky affair (although the French press has found it necessary to publish most of the details themselves).

Marianne says that, at heart, it agrees it is often healthier not to dwell on the private lives of public figures. It points out, however, that the traditional attitude of the French press frequently serves politicians better than the public. On several occasions, political-sexual affairs have become entangled with political or financial scandals which have been ignored because of the taboo on the exploration of private lives.

A classic example, the magazine says, is the career of the former foreign minister, Roland Dumas, whose role in kickbacks on state contracts is being investigated by two judges. As part of the investigation, Christine Deviers-Joncour, usually described in the press as an associate of Mr



Affairs of state: Jacques Chirac (above) had an affair with Claudia Cardinale (right), while Sylvia Kristel (left) was among Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's conquests
Photographs: Mike Moore, David Gadd



Dumas - actually his mistress - has been arrested on suspicion of receiving £6m in illegal commissions.

Marianne says the silence of the French press has allowed politicians to parade their virtue and attachment to family values, while living energetically immoral private lives. Throughout French history, there are events that have to be explained, romantically or sexually. For instance, Marshall Pétain was taken into the French government in 1939 because the mistress of the prime minister, Paul Reynaud, insisted that

he should be. Equally, says *Marianne*, there are many events in contemporary public life which can only be explained by opening the bedroom door.

The magazine gives a brief six-page survey of the liaisons not previously dangerous which have enlivened the secret history of the Fifth Republic since 1958. President Charles de Gaulle was irreproachable (though possibly not during the war). At the instigation of his wife, anyone known to be an adulterer was excluded from his governments. (De Gaulle, personally,

took a more relaxed view. Meeting an ambassador recalled from Moscow after an affair with a KGB stooge, the general simply said: "So, you've been in bed.")

Pompidou's activities were legendary but limited by ill-health while in the Elysée Palace. Giscard d'Estaing was rumoured to have many mistresses but this was probably exaggerated, *Marianne* says. He did, however, have a taste for young actresses who were approached by one of his officials and entertained at a country inn called Le Petit Coq aux Champ (the little

cock in the fields). Mitterrand's long-standing affairs, and his illegitimate daughter, Mazarine, were revealed toward the end of his life (to general indignation and fascination). But *Marianne* says that this was only a taste of the general atmosphere of "liberated morals", often linked with financial chicanery, which surrounded the Elysée under Mitterrand. Relative probity has been restored under Mr Chirac, but the magazine says that earlier in his career he was bugged by French security services during an affair with a Soviet air hostess.

Lewinsky heads for sanctuary

Monica Lewinsky, the 24-year-old alleged to have had a sexual relationship with President Bill Clinton, was preparing to leave Washington for her home in California yesterday, in an attempt to regain some privacy. She had been a virtual prisoner in her mother's city flat at the Watergate since claims about her and the President first broke almost two weeks ago.

After more than a week of turmoil, Mr Clinton's political position also looked much stronger. Riding high in the opinion polls, his approval rating for his performance as president reached a record 70 per cent over the weekend, a figure that exceeded even Ronald Reagan's best rating. This was despite the fact that more than 60 per cent of those asked also believed that Mr Clinton had probably lied about his relationship with Ms Lewinsky.

The capacity of Americans to praise Mr Clinton as president on the one hand, while also believing that he has been less than truthful, betrayed an unexpected willingness on their part to forgive personal flaws in return for administrative competence and was ascribed in part at least to the flourishing economy. But it also underlined the fact that Americans by and large like Mr Clinton.

While commentators yesterday tended to agree that the crisis for Mr Clinton had passed, they also stressed the fragility that could accompany the remaining three years of his presidency. He has still given no explanation of his relationship with Ms Lewinsky.

Hillary Clinton said in interviews last week that details of the relationship would be revealed in time. As long as the polls remain favourable, however, there will be minimal pressure on Mr Clinton to say any more. More risky for him is the continuing silence not just of Ms Lewinsky, but of the dozen or so women he was questioned about in the sworn evidence he gave to lawyers in the Paula Jones case. If any of them were to produce evidence that a sexual relationship existed, he will find himself on the wrong side of the perjury law. And if Ms Lewinsky changes her story to admit a sexual liaison, and has proof, Mr Clinton's televised denial will be used against him: not only in the court of law, but in the court of public opinion that has so far saved him.

— Mary Dejevsky, Washington

THE INDEPENDENT
INDEPENDENT

£10 Conran lunch

The Independent and Independent on Sunday in association with Terence Conran are delighted to offer readers the opportunity to enjoy lunch or early evening supper at six of London's top restaurants throughout January and February for £10

From Monday January 5th until Saturday February 28th, the following establishments are offering readers a two course lunch or early evening supper for just £10 per person.

How to Book

To participate in the offer simply collect one token (tokens will be printed every day until Saturday February 28th) and then telephone the restaurant of your choice quoting yourself as an independent diner. On your arrival at the restaurant you should present your token in order to qualify for the offer. Each token is valid for a complete table booking. The tokens will be valid for one week only, and will be dated accordingly. To continue to participate in the offer, simply collect a token from the week in which you wish to dine. Pre-booking is essential and all bookings are subject to availability.

A special discount is available on selected items in the Bluebird and Le Pont de la Tour shops on presentation of the token.



MOZZO



ZINC
BAR & GRILL



The Independent offer is available at the following restaurants:

Bluebird 350 King's Road, London, SW3 5UU
0171 559 1000
Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm

Blue Print Café The Design Museum, 28 Shad Thames, London, SE1 2YE
0171 378 7031
Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm*

Le Pont de la Tour Bar & Grill 36d Shad Thames, London, SE1 2YE
0171 403 8403
Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm

Mezzo 100 Wardour Street, London, W1V 3LE
0171 314 4000
Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 6pm - 7pm
closed Saturday lunchtime, open Sunday 12pm - 4pm

Quaglinos 16 Bury Street, St James's, London, SW1Y 6AL
0171 930 6767
Lunch 12noon - 3pm, early evening supper 5.30pm - 6.30pm

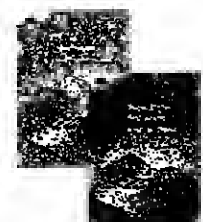
Zinc Bar & Grill 21 Haddon Street, London, W1R 7LF
0171 255 8899

The special 3 course menu is available between 12noon and 7pm between Monday and Wednesday the offer is extended until 11pm*

* The offer is available 7 days a week at all six restaurants
* Closed from 6pm on Sunday Offer not available after 6pm on February 14

We heard you wanted...

guides to make home buying easier.



Midland
The Listening Bank

Call 0800 100 129

www.midlandbank.com

Buying a home can feel like the most stressful thing you'll ever do. Midland's new guides take you through the whole process (one is written especially for first time buyers). They explain the essentials clearly and concisely - like how to calculate how much you can borrow and what insurances you need to consider.

For more detailed advice, you can talk to a mortgage specialist at any Midland Bank branch.

Call for details



or visit a branch



or cut the coupon.



For your free home buying guide, complete and return the coupon to: Midland Bank plc, FREEPOST NWV 1502, Manchester M45 9AZ.

Mr/Ms/Mrs/Other (please specify) Initials Surname
House name/number Street
Town
County Postcode

Daytime tel no (inc. STD) Evening tel no (inc. STD) MV26

Are you looking to move before Easter? ☐ Yes ☐ No. Are you a first time buyer? ☐ Yes ☐ No. Are you a Midland customer? ☐ Yes ☐ No.

If so please supply your sort code 410 ☐ ☐ ☐ I would like to be contacted by a Midland mortgage specialist. ☐ Are you happy to receive information from Midland in the future? ☐ Yes ☐ No.

US holds key to easing of Iraq oil bar

Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, has a plan to relax sanctions against Iraq. Baghdad would be allowed to increase the value of its oil exports to \$5.2bn over six months. But, Patrick Cockburn explains, the proposal is not quite what it seems.

It is more than just an increase in oil exports for humanitarian purposes. What Mr Annan is proposing – doubling Iraqi oil revenues from \$2bn to \$5.2bn – is the most significant relax-

ation in sanctions since they were introduced eight years ago after Iraq invaded Kuwait.

At the time, Iraq was exporting 3 million barrels a day. Under Mr Annan's plan, exports would have to rise to 2 million barrels a day to produce \$5.2bn. "It is tantamount to a partial lifting of sanctions," said Mehdi Varzi, director of oil and gas research at Dresdner, Kleinwort Benson in London. He doubted the UN Security Council would implement Mr Annan's plan in full.

But in Lisbon yesterday Bill Richardson, US ambassador to the UN, said: "The US will support the increase." Britain also said it welcomed the re-

port, pointing that it had helped initiate the oil-for-food programme for Iraq three years ago. In theory Iraq will therefore return to two-thirds of its export level before it invaded Kuwait, a prospect which led to a sharp slide in oil prices yesterday. A problem is that for the

moment there is no way the Iraqi oil industry can produce and export the amount of oil necessary to produce revenues of \$5.2bn. It was badly damaged by bombing in the Gulf War. In northern Iraq a pumping station on the 600-mile pipeline linking Kirkuk to Dortvol, on

Turkey's Mediterranean coast, was almost destroyed. Iraq built a bypass but export capacity was reduced by a third. A second pumping station on the main north-south pipeline was also damaged.

The US has so far prevented Iraq through the UN sanc-

tions committee, importing equipment for its oil industry to raise production. It has argued that this might benefit the Iraqi military machine. Iraq uses 600,000 barrels a day of crude oil at home, including oil exports to Jordan and diesel smuggled into Turkey, which it

cannot divert. This means that without US agreement to allow it to repair its oil industry, it will be unable to benefit fully from Mr Annan's plan.

The UN Security Council is expected to rule on the expanded oil-for-food plan in two weeks and it could be im-

Life goes on: Central Baghdad last week shortly before the end of the Ramadan month of fasting

Photograph: Reuters

plemented next month if Iraq agrees to it. But this may be delayed by bombing threatened by the US and Britain.

At the weekend Madeleine Albright, US Secretary of State, said airstrikes were weeks rather than months away. Iraq has always said it wants sanctions totally lifted. The Security Council insists they stay until Iraq complies with UN resolutions about the inspection and destruction of its biological, chemical and nuclear materials and the missiles to deliver them. In practice, if Iraq is allowed to repair its oil industry, Mr Annan's plan would make a large hole in the economic siege of Baghdad.

Bunker mentality as UK prepares for Gulf War II

If Britain is plunged into Gulf War II, its forces will be directed from a 300ft-deep bunker in London's suburbia. Ian Burrell went below ground to observe the preparations.

Beneath a 20ft screen showing pictures from CNN, military chiefs scuttled between computer terminals swapping details of latest developments in the Gulf. As each day passes without a diplomatic solution to the Iraq crisis, so the likelihood increases that the bunker near Pinner, in the suburbs of north-west London, will switch to a war footing.

Yesterday, as a British naval task group continued to exercise in Gulf waters, military chiefs who run the bunker, officially known as Permanent Joint Headquarters, Northwood, admitted Britain's part in any conflict would be marginal. An Army source said: "The Americans' combined power really is ... formidable; it's really quite impressive. Our ability to contribute to that force is relatively limited."

He conceded the US forces did not need British support. "The [Americans] have the power and capability to do whatever they have in mind on their own. [Britain's] military contribution is second to the political contribution we are making in this area."

Yesterday it emerged that the British force already in the Gulf has not been inoculated against chemical and biological weapons, despite American and British concern that Iraq possesses such weapons. The vaccines given British and US forces in the 1991 war have been linked with debilitating illnesses suffered by many veterans of the conflict.

The task group exercising in the Gulf in Operation Bolton is based around the carrier HMS *Invincible*, which has 21 aircraft aboard. A second carrier, HMS *Illustrious*, is undergoing final preparations to leave Gibraltar before heading for the Gulf to support or replace *In-*

vincible. On 20 January the Chief of Defence Staff, General Sir Charles Guthrie, sent a directive to the Northwood bunker, where it was received by the Chief of Joint Operations, General Christopher Wallace. The directive laid down what Britain hoped to achieve by Operation Bolton. An Army source said: "The aim is to get the UNSCOM inspectors back into Iraq and to give [Iraq] a clean bill of health that it has no nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction in its armoury."

The directive also gave Gen Wallace notice of the agreed rules of engagement, should a conflict develop, and the forces and budget at his disposal.

The operation has so far cost £10m but the expense could escalate if Britain uses its Joint Rapid Deployment Force, which is on 48 hours' notice to leave for the Gulf. The force is based on the Parachute and Commando brigades and has air and naval support.

While emphasising that they preferred a diplomatic solution to the crisis, military chiefs have identified three areas where British forces could make a significant contribution. They involve taking photographs from the air for use in bombing missions, taking part in armoured reconnaissance operations on the ground, and deploying mines at sea.

Geo Wallace would oversee any conflict from a gallery which overlooks the Operations Room at the pit of the Northwood bunker, which became operational in 1996 after Nato staff abandoned it at the end of the Cold War.

From his seat at the head of a conference table can see a bank of television screens which connect him via video conferencing links to other bunkers that will come into action if a conflict develops. One is beneath the Ministry of Defence in Whitehall, another is at Strike Command in High Wycombe and, most importantly of all, he can have face-to-face contact with General Anthony Zinni, his American counterpart at US Central Command in Tampa, Florida.

WANT TO CHANGE YOUR SCENERY?
TEST DRIVE THE RENAULT SCENIC.

Here's your chance to win a great multi-activity holiday — just by taking a drive in the Multi Activity Car!

With its fully removable seats and wealth of ingenious storage areas, the acclaimed new Renault Scenic is the most original, versatile and adaptable medium sized hatchback around.

RENAULT Now there's even better news. Test
FREEWAYS drive the Scenic before February 28th.

and your name will go into a prize draw. The prize? A holiday for four in the beautiful Cumbrian setting of the Oasis Lakeland Forest Village.

Amid 400 glorious acres, the lucky winner - plus family or friends - will have a week to remember, enjoying everything from abseiling, canoeing and dinghy sailing to restaurants, discos and beauty treatments. And to top it all, there'll even be a Scenic to drive for the week.

Ten runners-up will each receive a luxury picnic hamper. So don't hang about. Arrange to take a test drive in the new Renault Scenic now. With prices starting at just £12,995 on the road, and the superb Renault Freeways* offers still available, you won't believe how easy it is to change your scenery.

For more information about the prize draw, or your nearest Renault Dealer call 0800 52 51 50.



RENAULT

WIN A FREE FAMILY HOLIDAY

[illegible]

**Pay off your existing loans
with one simple low cost loan
from Direct Line.**

- You'll have fixed, low monthly payments throughout the term of the loan.
- No arrangement fee or complicated paper work.
- No security or deposit required.
- Call now for an instant decision on loans from £1,000 to £15,000.



0181 680 9966 **0161 831 9966** **0141 248 9966**
LONDON **MANCHESTER** **GLASGOW**
CALL ANYTIME 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and
9am to 5pm Saturday.
www.directline.co.uk Please quote ref. **IND 124**

Direct Line Financial Services Limited, 250 St Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SH. You must be aged 22 or over. Loans from £1,000 to £25,000, subject to status. Written quotations on request. Calls recorded and randomly monitored. Direct Line and the red phone are trademarks of Direct Line Insurance plc, used with its permission.

Arthur C Clarke postpones knighthood after sex claims

Science fiction author Arthur C Clarke yesterday denied a newspaper claim that he is a paedophile. Nonetheless, he asked that his knighthood ceremony be postponed so not to embarrass Prince Charles. Peter Popham reports.

Arthur C Clarke is still going to be Sir Arthur but the ceremony may have to wait for his reincarnation in another galaxy. That seemed the implication of the announcement from the seaside home of the prophet of the

Space Age yesterday, as the impact of the *Sunday Mirror's* story slowly sank in to this sleepy corner of the global village.

On Sunday the newspaper declared Clarke to be a self-confessed paedophile. He was quoted admitting as much, and a Sri Lankan "friend" - head of current affairs at the Sri Lankan Broadcasting Company - alleged that Clarke was still having sex with boys "a few months ago". Clarke claimed he had not been sexually active for 20 years.

Yesterday it was announced that he had requested the conferral of his knighthood to be postponed, to avoid embarrassing Prince Charles. The request was accepted. The

ceremony was due to be performed at the British High Commission tomorrow. Clarke was also said to be discussing the *Mirror's* story with his lawyers.

In Sri Lanka, even the astrophysicist operates at a sedate, pre-modern pace, so 36 hours after the *Mirror's* story broke it was my painful duty to bring it in the attention of the director of the institute that bears Clarke's name. Professor Sam Karunaratne was visibly stunned.

"I can't even believe that a person of the calibre of Dr Clarke would be descending in things of this nature," he said. "It's unimaginable... People are going to be, what do you say,

flabbergasted about this. If I were in his place I would have committed suicide!"

I also showed the story to Sri Lanka's most energetic campaigner against paedophilia, Maureen Seneviratne, who was equally appalled. "We've always considered him to be gay," she said. "It was the general opinion in the country that he was gay, but a paedophile... it's beyond my comprehension."

"He is one of the people that nobody could touch. A highly reputed figure, very influential. This will be a shock to many people."

The allegations against Clarke are so serious because they appear to connect with the seedier aspects of foreign

involvement with Sri Lanka. Elsewhere in Asia paedophilia means sex tourism. In Sri Lanka the established pattern is for wealthy Europeans to come into the country posing - and even performing - as businessmen or philanthropists. They set up homes close to the idyllic west or south coast beaches, and also close to communities of impoverished former fishermen. They then win the trust of local boys and begin abusing them, paying them tiny sums of money in return.

A German man is serving a two-year sentence and two other cases are going through the courts, and up to 100 suspected paedophiles are deported every year. Ms Seneviratne's organis-

ation Peace (Protecting Environment And Children Everywhere) believes that as many as 7,000 children are involved in the trade at any one time. "Previous governments didn't even look into it, because all they were concerned about was tourism," said Ms Seneviratne.

"When we began working on the problem six years ago people thought the foreign paedophile was a wonderful fairy godfather giving out presents - so why were we rocking the boat? People were only outraged when the facts were brought to light."

The government of President Chandrika Kumaratunga has now taken Peace's research to heart and a Presidential Task Force is investigating.

Clarke has indeed been a wonderful fairy godfather for Sri Lanka. He set up the Arthur Clarke Centre for Modern Technologies 15 years ago with the money he received with a Marconi International Fellowship, and in a country that is still in many cases crushingly poor it is an inspiring success. Thanks to the centre, and Clarke's generosity with his contacts, many Sri Lankan scientists punch well above their nation's weight in research and development. Whatever Clarke's past activities, his friends at the centre insist that he now lives a life of intense respectability. "Even if there is an element of truth," says Professor Karunaratne, "sometimes silence is better."



Clarke: Claimed not to be sexually active for 20 years

Australia maps out its route to new republic

Australia's move to ditch the Queen is finally under way. It could become a republic by the end of the millennium. Robert Milliken reports from Sydney.

A constitutional convention of 152 delegates from all walks of life gathered in Canberra yesterday to decide the nuts-and-bolts of how a new Australian head of state will replace the British monarchy which has been at the centre of the country's constitution for the past 97 years.

The central question of whether Australia should become a republic at all will hardly feature at the convention. It seems to have been decided by consensus already. More than half the delegates are committed republicans. They include politicians, church leaders, Aboriginal chiefs, television personalities, sports stars and household names such as Janet Holmes à Court, Australia's most powerful businesswoman.

Even John Howard, the Prime Minister, who is sometimes described as Australia's "last monarchist" because of his staunch opposition to changing the constitution, grudgingly conceded, when he opened the two-week convention, that history may be on the republicans' side. He said: "In my view, the only argument in substance in favour of an Australian republic is that the symbolism of Australia sharing its legal head of state with a number of other nations is no longer appropriate."

Mr Howard promised that, if the convention could agree on a republican model by the time it winds up on 13 February, the government would put such a model to the people in a referendum next year. If the referendum passed, then Australia

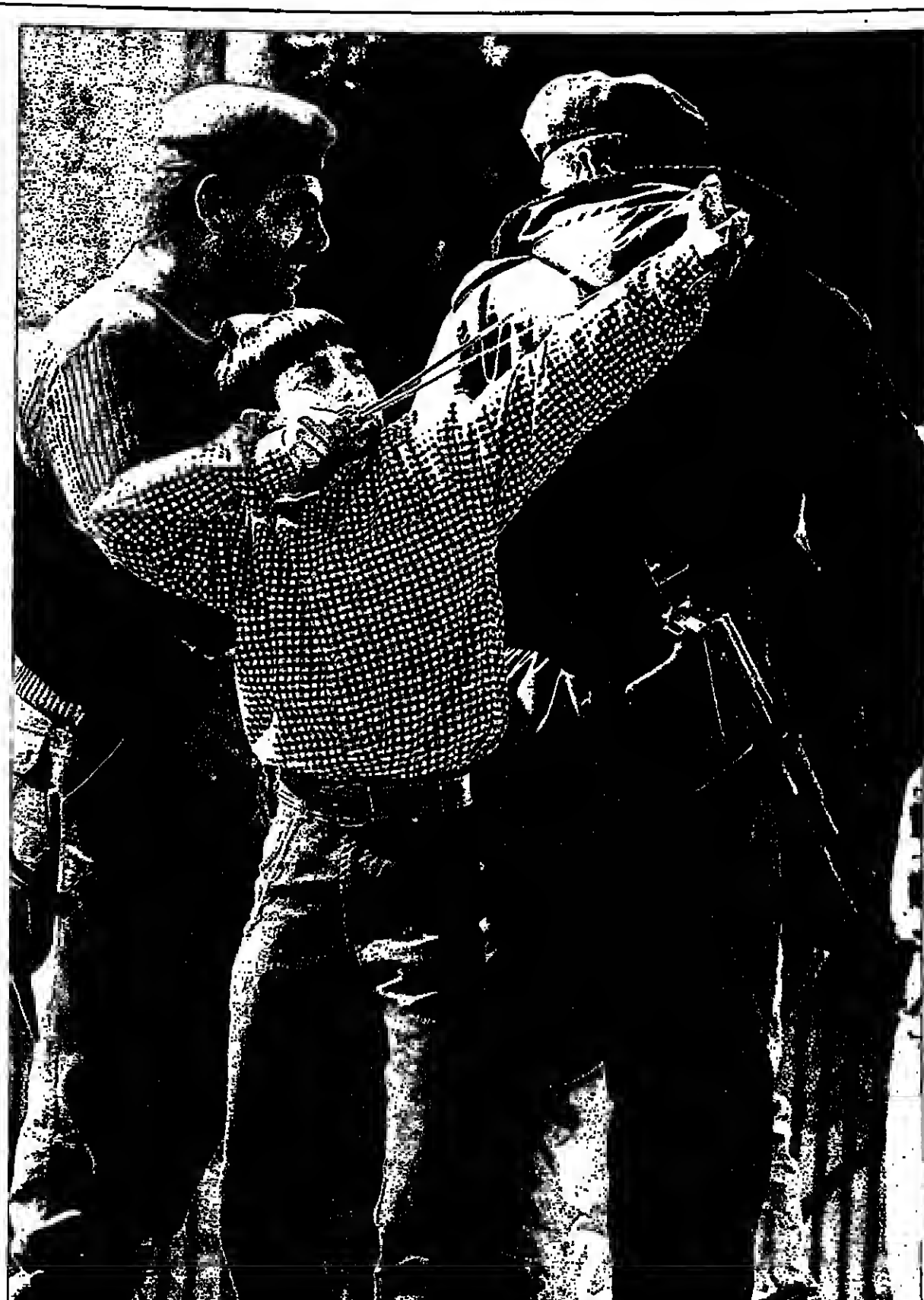
would become a republic in time for the centenary of its federation in January 2001.

There will be frantic horse-trading over the next fortnight, therefore, to make sure that such a model emerges. If it does not, the republican debate which has ignited Australian politics over the past four years will have counted for nothing, and the issue is likely to recede into the next century. As Kim Beazley, leader of the opposition Labor Party, put it yesterday: "The Australian people did not vote for a train wreck at this convention, and they must not get one."

Republicans are divided on the key question of how a president should be appointed, and what powers the office should have. The Australian Republican Movement (ARM), the main republican lobby group, wants the president elected by a two-thirds majority of both houses of parliament sitting together, rather than by a direct popular vote, the overwhelming choice in public opinion polls.

The ARM argues that a directly-elected president could create havoc in Australia's Westminster parliamentary system by installing a potential rival power base to that of the prime minister. The ARM and Mr Howard are strange bedfellows on this point. The Prime Minister called on the convention yesterday to reject the direct election model.

Some republicans fear that if they do that, the whole republican issue could fall flat at a referendum. Opinion polls show that most people believe a former politician would get the job of president if it is left to parliament to elect him or her. Recent opinion polls show that 52 per cent of Australians want a republic, and about 35 per cent want to keep the monarchy. A survey a week ago by *The Australian* produced 67 per cent in favour of a republic.



Missing the action: A Palestinian boy aiming a slingshot at Israeli troops behind the backs of Palestinian police officers on the West Bank, Bethlehem, yesterday, in the fourth day of violent protests. Photograph: David Silverman

Philippines jet missing near volcano with 104 on board

A Philippines DC-9 plane with 104 people on board vanished and an airport official said it appeared to have crashed into a volcano on southern Mindanao. Officials refused to acknowledge the plane had crashed 18 hours after it went missing; mountaineers set off at the 8,200m Mt Balatucan to look for Cebu Pacific Air Flight 387. It was flying from Manila to Cagayan de Oro, 500 miles from the capital, when it disappeared after a stopover at central Tacloban city. Officials said it made its last contact when it was at 11,000ft and 37 miles from Cagayan de Oro. — Reuters, Cagayan de Oro

Bosnia drive for normality

International mediators unveiled common car-registration plates for Bosnia, saying they hoped the neutral design would enable free movement across the country's *de facto* ethnic boundaries. Jacques Klein, deputy international High Representative to Bosnia, said "the most talked-about" numberplate in the world had great significance for the country's peace process. The car plates carry a neutral design without national or religious symbols, unlike those currently in use, which betray a driver's ethnicity and home town. — Reuters, Sarajevo

Costa Rica goes conservative

Costa Rican voters upset over high prices and inflation chose a conservative economist to be their next president. Wearing the red and blue of the opposition Social Christian Unity Party, revellers hung from the sides of trucks and screamed the name of the winner - Miguel Angel Rodriguez. With 59 per cent of ballot boxes counted, he had 46.8 per cent of the vote, compared with 44.9 per cent for Jose Miguel Corrales of the National Liberation Party. — AP, San Jose

Algerian forces kill 60 rebels

Algerian security forces killed 60 rebels south of Algiers, and 17 civilians, including a baby, were murdered elsewhere, Algerian newspapers said. *Le Matin* said 20 attackers cut the throats of 10 villagers in the western province of Tiemcen on Sunday, including a grandmother and the baby. Some 60 assailants slit the throats of four peasants as they were returning from work at vineyards in the wine-producing region of Medea, 70 km from Algiers. — Reuters, Paris

Germans find beauty in words

Mark Twain poked fun at German, Chaplin exploited its gurgling inflections in *The Great Dictator*, and Dutch students last year voted it the "most uncool jargon in the world". And now it turns out to be banal, too. Readers of the tabloid *Bild Zeitung* say the most beautiful German word is *Gesundheit* - health, followed by *danke*. Words that give Germans most "satisfaction" - at number five - are "peace", "love", "mother" and "trust". It's a far cry from the Germans' favourite vocabulary earlier this century. A Berlin newspaper ran a similar survey in the 1930s with different results. "Peace" then did not seem all that important, and Germans clearly were not as prone to hypochondria as they are today. The crowning glory of the German language then was *Andacht* - "devotion", followed by *Demut* - "humility". *Freiheit* - "freedom" - took bronze. — Inne Karacs, Bonn

Clinton lays ground for Gore win with balanced budget

President Clinton proposed America's first budget surplus in three decades. Mary Dejevsky in Washington says if the sums have been done correctly, the Democrats will have a strong card to play in the next presidential election in 2000.



President Bill Clinton: Scored two political coups

pension payments provisionally agreed by the big tobacco companies to compensate for the costs of treating tobacco-related diseases.

That settlement has still not been approved by Congress and it could be eroded as states settle their tobacco claims individually. Mr Clinton has thus given Congress, where there is a Republican majority keen on fiscal discipline, an incentive to approve a tobacco settlement as soon as possible.

Mr Clinton's second political coup is to have undercut the Republicans on their calls for tax cuts, and even fundamental tax reform. Rather than spend any projected budget surplus on reducing taxes, the President is insisting that the priority should be to ensure funding for federal retirement benefits. This answers a continuing anxiety of many middle-aged Americans who fear that the money could run out, or be severely diminished, just as they reach pensionable age.

President Bill Clinton, restored almost to his old, untroubled self, yesterday introduced a federal budget for the next fiscal year that would produce the first balance for 30 years and a projected surplus for the decade to follow.

Drawing a large nought against a prepared dollar sign on a billboard beside his lectern, Mr Clinton said that his budget, for the 1999 fiscal year which begins this October, would ensure a balanced budget "not only next year, but as far as the eye can see".

The budget included \$252.6bn (£159bn) for defence and an increase of about 6 per

cent for foreign aid. The budget for the current fiscal year, which was passed by Congress last autumn, contained the conservative projection of a balanced budget by 2002.

The new forecast reflects the continuing economic boom in the United States - low inflation, low unemployment, rising incomes and high growth - reported by the President in his State of the Union address last week.

But it also reflects some shrewd political calculation. A large proportion of the money - \$65bn dollars over five years - required to offset federal spending in 1999, comes from com-

Whissin on the rocks as Spanish launch the alcohol-free whisky

Hoping to match the success of alcohol-free beer and wine, a company in the Spanish city of Granada is now offering what Scots and Irish may regard as the ultimate heresy: alcohol-free whisky.

Made from a mixture of barley, maize and wheat, the dippie is the product of more than two years' research and tests by the family firm, Es'padador, which specialises in non-alcoholic substitutes.

"Whissin", a short form of "whisky sin [without] alcohol", hits Spain's supermarket shelves on Thursday. Heating and pasteurising the mixture of grains and sugars prevents it from fermenting, and aromas are added to give it a passable tang.

"It is impossible to imitate on the palate the sensation produced by a drink containing 40 [per cent] alcohol. It has a different bouquet," Domingo Carrion, a spokesman for the company, admitted. "But Whissin is a substitute that you can drink like whisky: neat, with ice or with mixers."

The company, which orig-

inally produced wine and fizzy drinks, has been moving into non-alcoholic substitutes in recent years. Mr Carrion was convinced there would be a market for a whisky substitute, as the real thing is the most widely-sold spirit in Spain.

"As far as we know, there is nothing like it on the market at the moment," said Mr Carrion. He originally wanted to call the drink "Whissyn" but had to bow to objections from whisky producers who considered that name too similar to the real thing.

Authentic producers must feel their malt spirit has been subjected already to enough indignities, owing to the proliferation of Celtic-sounding whisky-based drinks. Some may feel that to extract the alcohol is going too far. None the less, alcohol-free drinks are increasingly popular in Spain, where it is customary to spend many hours of the day and night drinking socially, but where it is unacceptable - and rare - for people to be blind drunk. — Elizabeth Nash, Madrid

THE INDEPENDENT THREE-IN-ONE PAN - Just £29.95 plus p&p

This multicooker made of stainless steel, has a thermal base for good heat conduction and is suitable for use on all heat sources except induction. It has a capacity of 5 litres (8 3/4 pints).

The multicooker is an ingeniously designed piece of kitchenware - once you have one you'll wonder how you managed without it. The centre section liner pan is perfect for cooking and lifting pasta and vegetables and also doubles as a handled colander. The top section of the pan can be used for steaming, while the base can be used as a general purpose lidded pan, or in the oven as a casserole.

At just £29.95 plus £2.95 for p&p per order this multicooker is a bargain.

HOW TO ORDER

Fill in the coupon and send together with cheque or postal order. NO CASH please to -

THE INDEPENDENT MULTICOOKER OFFER
325 LONDON ROAD, WESTCLIFF ON SEA, ESSEX S80 7BX

For Access/Visa orders, please phone
01702 332922

We deliver to addresses in the UK mainland only. Please allow up to 28 days for delivery from receipt of order. Return within 7 days for refund if not completely satisfied. Offer subject to availability.

Please send me Multicooker @ £29.95 plus £2.95 per order for p&p

I enclose a crossed cheque for £ () (address on back) made payable to: NEWSPAPER PUBLISHING INDY66

or debit my Access/Visa account by this amount. My card number is:

Expiry Date / / Signature

NAME

ADDRESS

Post Code

Sent to: THE INDEPENDENT MULTICOOKER OFFER, 325 London Road, Westcliff on Sea, Essex S80 7BX.

Please tick this box if you wish to receive future offers from Newspaper Publishing Plc. ☐ Please

Reg in England (10809) Newspaper Publishing plc

Reg Office: 1 Church Square, Clerkenwell, London EC1A 3EE.

Which airline partnership has all these awards?

CONTINENTAL AIRLINES

Best U.S. Airline Business Class 1997
by *SmartMoney Magazine*

Best Airline for Customer
Satisfaction - Domestic Long Haul 1996 & 1997
by *Frequent Flyer Magazine / J.D. Power & Associates**

Best U.S. Frequent Flyer Programme of
the Year and best Elite Level Programme 1997
by *InsiderFlyer Magazine*

Airline of the Year 1996
by *Air Transport World Magazine*

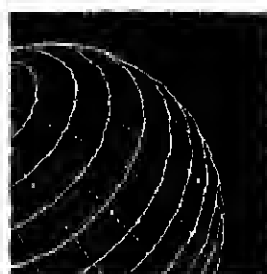
VIRGIN ATLANTIC

Best Business Airline Transatlantic 1997
by *Business Travel World Magazine*

Best Transatlantic Airline of the Year 1997
by *Travel Weekly Magazine*

Best International Frequent Flyer Programme 1997
by *InsiderFlyer Magazine*

Best International Airline Business Class 1997
by *SmartMoney Magazine*



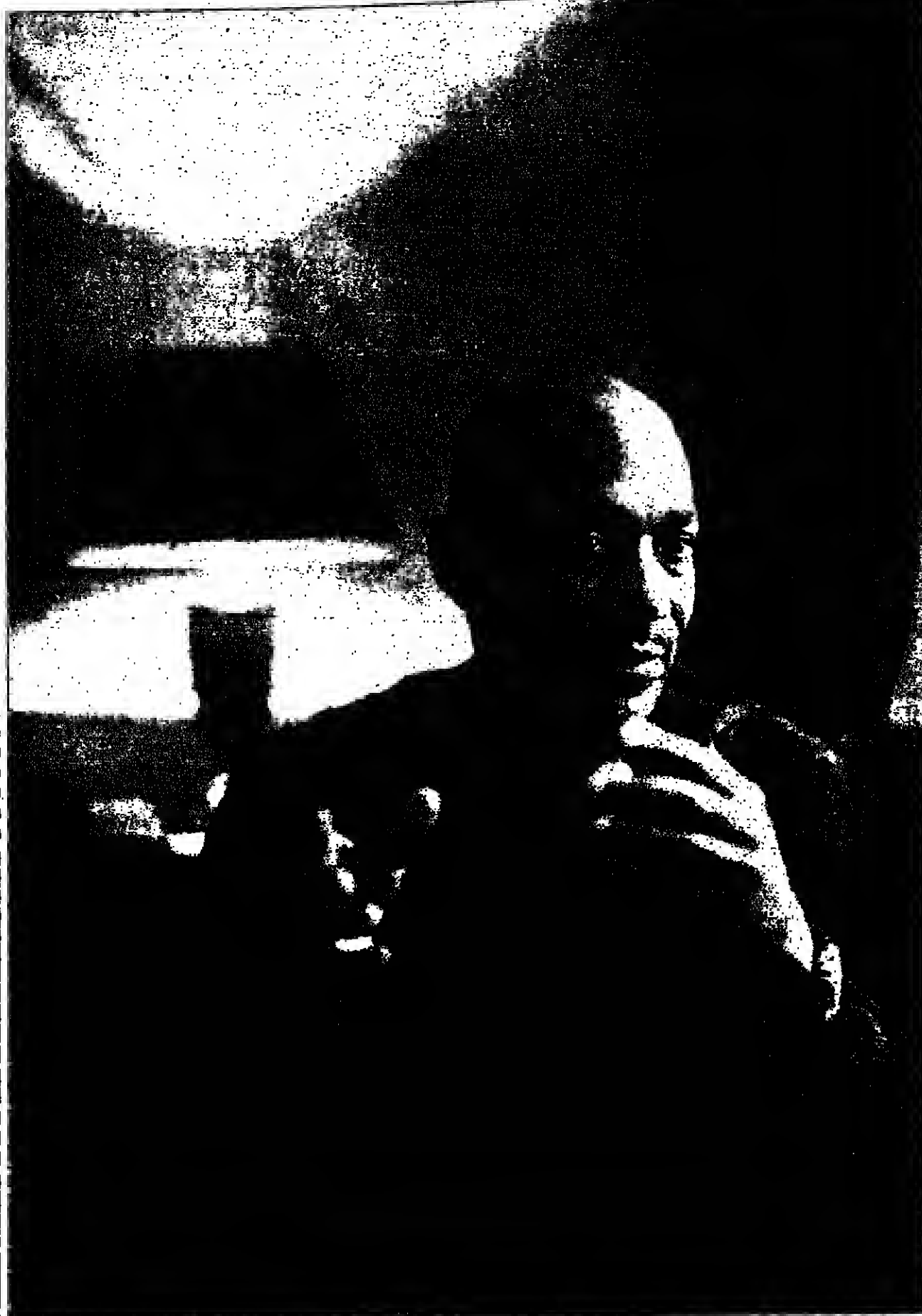
Continental
Airlines



virgin
atlantic

PARTNERS

*Continental Airlines was the highest ranked airline for flights 500 miles and more in the Frequent Flyer magazine/J.D. Power and Associates 1996 & 1997 Domestic Airline Frequent Flyer Satisfaction Study™, 1997 Study conducted among frequent airline travellers who completed 6,852 individual flight evaluations.



Errol Brown: 'If you have a good standard of living you have dignity, and that is very important' Photograph: Tom Eilston

'My first miracle was that I suddenly became musical'

REVELATIONS

The time: 1968
The place: West Hampstead
The man: Errol Brown of Hot Chocolate

My mother had just died, and being an only child from a broken family, I was very bruised from the experience. It was breast cancer and she had been sick for two years. Although the doctor told me she was dying, she kept it a secret. She didn't say anything either: we kept up the pretence right to the end. It was the biggest pain I have ever had in my life. I had followed her here from Jamaica when I was 10. There was no family in this country except one aunt in Stockwell, so I felt terribly alone. To cope with the trauma, I played a lot of sports and kept myself very busy.

Looking back, I realise I was searching for something, I just didn't know what. I was 20 and working at the Treasury in Whitehall as a clerical officer. If a question was asked about war debts in Communist bloc countries, I would get the files together and write a short answer. It was an easy job because I'd only be called for about twice a year - and I had an assistant. Most of the time I was drinking tea, playing table tennis and dreaming of a better future.

Although it was a good job, all I had to look forward to was becoming an executive officer in 10 years' time. I knew I would never be able to afford a Rolls-Royce or take the holidays I wanted. I had observed that if you have a good standard of living you can have dignity and that is very important to me. I know the colour issue could come up at this point but I prefer not to talk about it because it is too clichéd - everybody is surviving for independence and to be in control of their lives.

I sensed there was something else I could do, but what? Amazingly the answer to all my searching was just across the street where I lived in West Hampstead. Back in 1968,

through mutual friends, I met Tony Wilson whose flat was almost opposite mine. He was a musician who already had released a few singles. At that point, I had no ambition to be a songwriter and never thought I had any chance in the music industry. The only singing I had ever done was as a soprano in the church choir. Tony and I would go ten-pin bowling and generally hang out together. Round this time I began to get melodies in my head. Normal-

ing her that sparked off my writing and provided me with a much needed emotional outlet. Tony and I formed Hot Chocolate, and I sat down and wrote new words to John Lennon's "Give Peace a Chance". We demoed the song but being so new had no idea you needed permission. The guy that paid for the recording sent it to the Apple label for John's approval. We all laughed but four days later he called and said: "John Lennon loves it and wants to put it out straight away!"

For a group of kids in West Hampstead the great man being interested in them was another miracle. Although Tony Wilson was the lead singer of Hot Chocolate, I had to sing on the recording because he was still under contract to another company. I told him I couldn't, but he reassured me that I would be OK. The record came out and got a lot of attention, it was enough for me to gamble and give up the Treasury. We had written a song for Herman's Hermits and I discovered that their producer was Mickie Most. We took a tape of our songs to his office, but he didn't have a tape machine. We left without seeing him and thought that anyway he would never be interested in us. Three months later, I woke up with a very strong feeling: I had to go and see Mickie that very day. He listened to the original song I had wanted to play him but thought it was only pleasant. Since our first visit we had written another song and we put on this new demo and Mickie's response was "Thank God I came to work today." The second song got us the deal. My third miracle. After a while Mickie Most wanted us to write songs for ourselves too. Everybody thought that Tony had the better voice; he was certainly better at hitting the notes and had a better range. However Mickie felt that I should become the lead singer because I had the more commercial voice. I stood out while when Tony sang it sounded like several other people. Another twist of fate.

'It must be tough for him. That one argument must have cost him millions of pounds'

ly I wouldn't take any notice of them, but one day when Tony was driving the car it happened again. Instead of ignoring the tune, I started to hum it aloud. He asked me what it was. "Just something that popped into my mind," I replied.

After it had happened two or three times, he asked me to write some songs with him. I was amazed that he thought I could do it. However, like a duck finding water, I had discovered what I should be doing. That was the first miracle, and as my song says, "I believe in miracles". I am very spiritual and feel in touch with something greater. I can't help but think that maybe my mother had been some guidance. Or why else would I suddenly become so musical? Really it was the emotion of los-

ing her that sparked off my writing and provided me with a much needed emotional outlet.

Tony and I formed Hot Chocolate, and I sat down and wrote new words to John Lennon's "Give Peace a Chance". We demoed the song but being so new had no idea you needed permission. The guy that paid for the recording sent it to the Apple label for John's approval. We all laughed but four days later he called and said: "John Lennon loves it and wants to put it out straight away!"

For a group of kids in West Hampstead the great man being interested in them was another miracle. Although Tony Wilson was the lead singer of Hot Chocolate, I had to sing on the recording because he was still under contract to another company. I told him I couldn't, but he reassured me that I would be OK. The record came out and got a lot of attention, it was enough for me to gamble and give up the Treasury. We had written a song for Herman's Hermits and I discovered that their producer was Mickie Most. We took a tape of our songs to his office, but he didn't have a tape machine. We left without seeing him and thought that anyway he would never be interested in us. Three months later, I woke up with a very strong feeling: I had to go and see Mickie that very day. He listened to the original song I had wanted to play him but thought it was only pleasant. Since our first visit we had written another song and we put on this new demo and Mickie's response was "Thank God I came to work today." The second song got us the deal. My third miracle. After a while Mickie Most wanted us to write songs for ourselves too. Everybody thought that Tony had the better voice; he was certainly better at hitting the notes and had a better range. However Mickie felt that I should become the lead singer because I had the more commercial voice. I stood out while when Tony sang it sounded like several other people. Another twist of fate.

'It must be tough for him. That one argument must have cost him millions of pounds'

ly I wouldn't take any notice of them, but one day when Tony was driving the car it happened again. Instead of ignoring the tune, I started to hum it aloud. He asked me what it was. "Just something that popped into my mind," I replied.

After it had happened two or three times, he asked me to write some songs with him. I was amazed that he thought I could do it. However, like a duck finding water, I had discovered what I should be doing. That was the first miracle, and as my song says, "I believe in miracles". I am very spiritual and feel in touch with something greater. I can't help but think that maybe my mother had been some guidance. Or why else would I suddenly become so musical? Really it was the emotion of los-

ing her that sparked off my writing and provided me with a much needed emotional outlet. Tony and I formed Hot Chocolate, and I sat down and wrote new words to John Lennon's "Give Peace a Chance". We demoed the song but being so new had no idea you needed permission. The guy that paid for the recording sent it to the Apple label for John's approval. We all laughed but four days later he called and said: "John Lennon loves it and wants to put it out straight away!"

For a group of kids in West Hampstead the great man being interested in them was another miracle. Although Tony Wilson was the lead singer of Hot Chocolate, I had to sing on the recording because he was still under contract to another company. I told him I couldn't, but he reassured me that I would be OK. The record came out and got a lot of attention, it was enough for me to gamble and give up the Treasury. We had written a song for Herman's Hermits and I discovered that their producer was Mickie Most. We took a tape of our songs to his office, but he didn't have a tape machine. We left without seeing him and thought that anyway he would never be interested in us. Three months later, I woke up with a very strong feeling: I had to go and see Mickie that very day. He listened to the original song I had wanted to play him but thought it was only pleasant. Since our first visit we had written another song and we put on this new demo and Mickie's response was "Thank God I came to work today." The second song got us the deal. My third miracle. After a while Mickie Most wanted us to write songs for ourselves too. Everybody thought that Tony had the better voice; he was certainly better at hitting the notes and had a better range. However Mickie felt that I should become the lead singer because I had the more commercial voice. I stood out while when Tony sang it sounded like several other people. Another twist of fate.

'It must be tough for him. That one argument must have cost him millions of pounds'

ly I wouldn't take any notice of them, but one day when Tony was driving the car it happened again. Instead of ignoring the tune, I started to hum it aloud. He asked me what it was. "Just something that popped into my mind," I replied.

After it had happened two or three times, he asked me to write some songs with him. I was amazed that he thought I could do it. However, like a duck finding water, I had discovered what I should be doing. That was the first miracle, and as my song says, "I believe in miracles". I am very spiritual and feel in touch with something greater. I can't help but think that maybe my mother had been some guidance. Or why else would I suddenly become so musical? Really it was the emotion of los-

Interview by Andrew G Marshall

Errol Brown's tour of the UK starts on 20 March in Portsmouth and ends on 22 May in Jersey.



Ready for battle: Siegfried Sassoon during the First World War when he was known as Mad Jack by his men

Siegfried Sassoon – mad, sad or heroically confused?

To us his anti-war poems and his sensational protest seem sanity itself, but the War Office papers, released yesterday, said he was mad. What is certainly true, says Ross Davies, is that he spent his whole life fighting his nightmares.

The War Office, according to his army file released by the Public Record Office today, considered him "a lunatic". Why else would he have had a protest against the war read out in the Commons? His men called him Mad Jack, because of his recklessness in the trenches, where he was recommended for a Victoria Cross. Wilfred Owen and Edmund Blunden who went through the same fire, called him master-poet, patron and above all, friend.

Whatever you may think of the War Office's description, he certainly was a man of deep ambiguities. Debate about his attitudes, his sexuality, and what he intended in some of his war poems, remains unresolved.

But "friend" is how generations of people trying to make sense of the British experience the Great War of 1914-1918 have seen Siegfried Sassoon ever since. There are his poems, but above all there is *The Complete Memoirs of George Sherston*, Sassoon's trilogy of fictionalised autobiography, which is the first stop for many readers on their search to understand what soldiers had to put up with, and how and why they stood it. Sassoon himself never really worked that one out, and he was still trying when he died, aged 81, 31 years ago.

With a name like Siegfried you might have expected this man to be on the other side during the Great War. He was thus named by his mother, a Wagner lover. He was the most "English" of men, his passions in life before the war cricket, fox-hunting and writing poems about not much else.

Yet Sassoon comes down to us today as the man who dared to protest against the war, and with a little help from his friends, notably his fellow-officer in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, Robert Graves, to get away with it. There can be no doubt that by the middle-point of the war many soldiers on both sides had come to feel that the fighting was

being prolonged needlessly. Generals far away from the fighting were combining with windbags in Parliament and moneybags out of it to fight it out to the last man in the trenches, or so it seemed to the men in the mud. The deference is that Sassoon said so, not later but at the time. He did so to the horror of the like-minded Graves who was frightened that if Sassoon went on in this vein the British would now accomplish what the Germans had so far failed to do, which was to bump Sassoon off.

This is the Sassoon that crops up in another trilogy, Pat Barker's *Regeneration* (Viking) which appeared between 1991 and 1996, and in the current film of the same name. Sassoon famously met and befriended Wilfred Owen in the Craiglockhart sanatorium, where Sassoon had been sent after his protest, and encouraged Owen to write the poems that, with Sassoon's, for many people define the years 1914-1918.

Others feel differently. To Adrian Caesar, an academic, much of the Sassoon's war writing "angry, violent and sado-masochistic." In evidence, Caesar his study of the war poets taking it like a man, Caesar quotes Sassoon's poem *Peace*:

*In my heart there's cruel war that must be waged
In darkness vile with moans and bleeding bodies maimed;
A gnawing hunger drives me, wild to be assuaged,
And bitter lust chuckles within me unashamed.*

Caesar's Sassoon wanted the Germans to bump him off. His Sassoon was involved in "a vicious circle of anger and guilt" over his homosexuality, from which the only escape was death. The peace protest, like the daring in battle, was to invite another self-martyrdom. When neither the Germans nor the British obliged, Caesar argues, Sassoon spent the rest of his life trying to make his experience manageable.

There is no end of Sassoons and books about Sassoons. Ironically, the one many people would like to read will never be written. As London university lecturer Jean Moorcroft Wilson is to reveal in her *Siegfried Sassoon: the making of a poet*, the first volume of which Duckworth publishes this May, Sassoon wanted to write a book

about his troubled sexuality. In 1918, a man, particularly a soldier, did not even speak of homosexuality. At the end of Sassoon's life, he still did not dare write of it. Ironically, the law legalising sex between consenting adults was repealed in 1967, the year Sassoon died, his book unwritten. Even now, a biography authorised by the Sassoon estate has been bedevilled by disagreements over the same issue.

Moorcroft Wilson is being cagey about her Sassoon. She says Caesar's Sassoon is "too black and white." Hers is more an icon for the 1990s – a "very brave man, yet one prepared to rip his Military Cross from his uniform and throw it into the River Mersey". We are in an age of protest, she says, and Sassoon's protest is very attractive today.

Sassoon she believes was two people. One was an excitable young man caught up in the excitement of war such as exhilaration of patrolling at night in No Man's Land. But that was an artificial state created by his surroundings. The other man was the one who, back at home, and had time to think about the war never hesitated to say that, in the light of German peace overtures, what was happening to his friends and to his men was wrong.

Dr Moorcroft Wilson refuses to be drawn upon Sassoon's sexuality, or indeed whether he was homosexual or bisexual other than "it was a great problem to him" and that his orientation may have changed over the years. Although he had affairs with men in the 1920s he did later meet and fall in love with a woman, Hester Getty, and they had a son, George. Though the marriage ended in separation, it lasted for many years and they parted friends. Dr Moorcroft Wilson may have more to say in the second volume of her biography, which takes up the story from 1918 onwards.

Edmund Blunden, whom Sassoon helped after the war, worked out his nightmares in many poems, but wrote much else. So too did Robert Graves. But with Sassoon, it was different. In a career of over 30 years he wrote and rewrote poems and autobiography about the years up to 1918, but published little of note about the years afterwards. It was as if there was no road leading out of the Great War. The one book Sassoon wanted to write, he couldn't. Others will keep trying to do it for him.

هكذا من الأصل

Which airline partnership now gives you all these rewards?

NOW OFFERING 6 DAILY FLIGHTS
FROM LONDON TO NEW YORK

From London Heathrow:

- 1 daily flight to New York/Newark
- 2 daily flights to New York/JFK
- 2 daily flights to Los Angeles
- 1 daily flight to Washington
- 1 daily flight to San Francisco

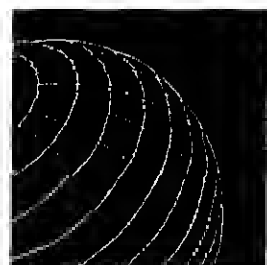
1 daily flight to Miami

From London Gatwick:

- 3 daily flights to New York/Newark
- 1 daily flight to Boston
- 1 daily flight to Orlando

From 2nd February two award winning airlines, Continental Airlines and Virgin Atlantic, bring you more flights and frequency to more destinations - giving you even more choice.

So if it's for business or pleasure see your local travel agent or call Continental Airlines on 01293 776464 or Virgin Atlantic on 01293 747747.



Continental
Airlines



virgin
atlantic

PARTNERS

All Heathrow flights operated by Virgin Atlantic. Flights to Boston and Orlando from London Gatwick and one daily flight from London Gatwick to New York/Newark also operated by Virgin Atlantic. All other flights operated by Continental Airlines.



The killing - The Battle of the Somme, in which Sassoon saw action in 1916



Photograph: Hulton Getty

A doctor in the house? No, but here's a home-test kit...

Medical technology is bringing tests previously confined to the laboratory into our homes, allowing us to search for signs of disease well before any obvious symptoms appear. Is this new patient power – or another health risk? Peter Baker investigates.

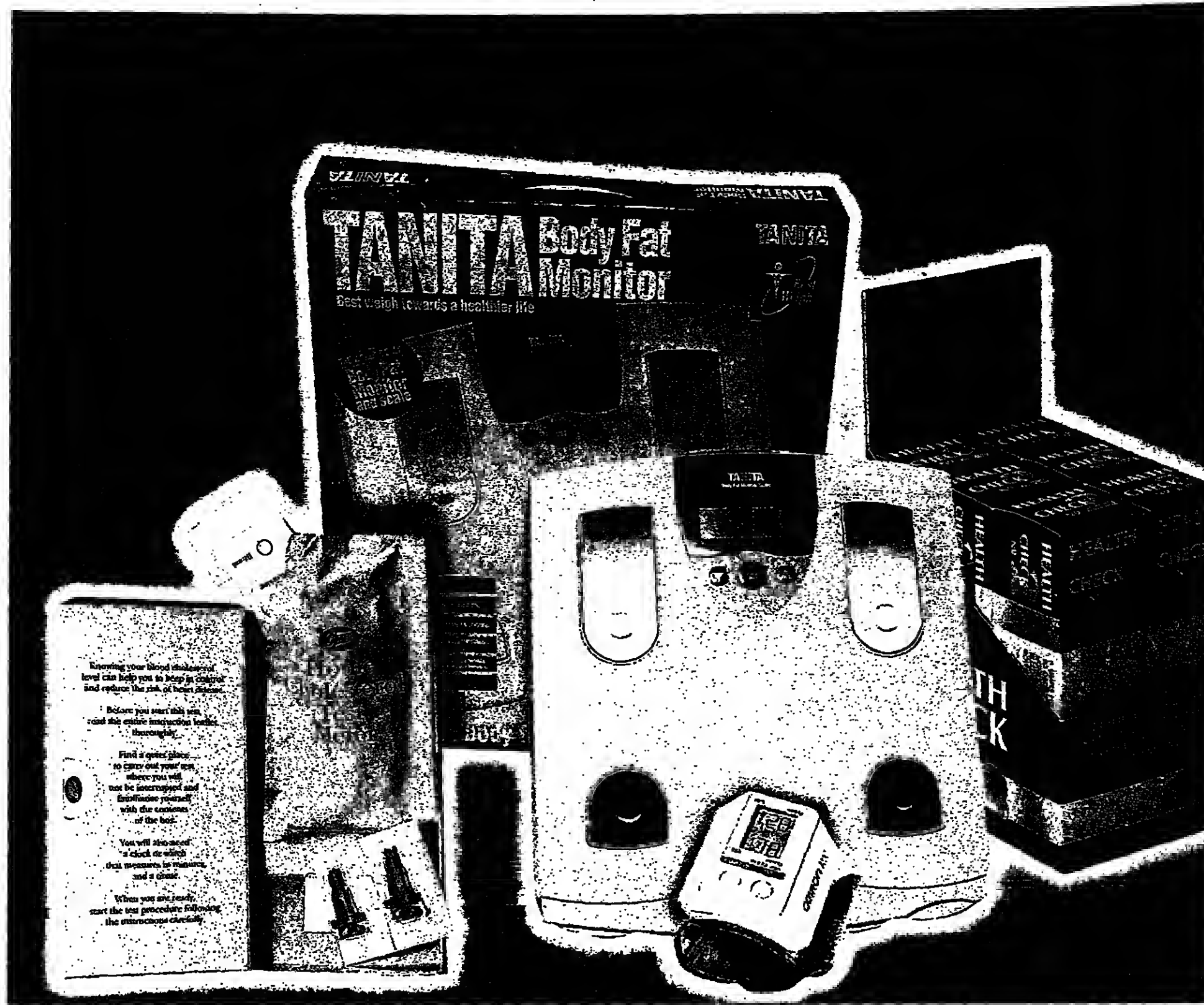
If a mole changes colour, a strange lump appears, or our bowel or bladder habits change, then we know we should visit a doctor. But we can now use more than our eyes, fingers and general sense of well-being to detect potential health problems.

Most pharmacies now stock a range of home-test products. Cholesterol tests and blood pressure monitors have been available for several years but several new devices have recently come on to the market. These enable us to analyse our stools for traces of blood (a possible symptom of a wide range of bowel disorders, including cancer), probe our urine for excess glucose (which could indicate diabetes) and measure our body fat to check if it is a risk factor for heart disease.

If we lived in the United States, we could buy more diagnostic kits than might be found in many British hospitals. Anxious Americans can check themselves for HIV, chlamydia, helicobacter pylori (the bacteria linked to peptic ulcers), tuberculosis, hepatitis, pneumonia and prostate specific antigen (a marker for prostate cancer). They can even inspect their children's urine for evidence of illegal drug use.

Although home-testing for HIV is specifically banned in the UK, there is no regulatory framework that prevents other home tests being marketed here – and they almost certainly will be. "We're all so greedy for information that this is an unstoppable process," says Dr David Murfin of the Royal College of General Practitioners.

But while home tests may well seem like a hypochondriac's dream come true, should the rest of us be investing in them? Common-sense suggests that any product capable of detecting health problems at the earliest possible stage must be beneficial. After all, the sooner a problem is detected, the greater the likelihood of successful treatment.



Photomontage: Jonathan Anstee

successful treatment.

Cecilia Yardley of Colon Cancer Concern argues that "18,000 people a year die of bowel cancer while research suggests screening could detect up to 18 per cent of cases before they would otherwise have been picked up and when they can be successfully treated".

Doubts remain about the reliability of some of the tests, however. While it is tempting to assume that any device incorporating chemicals, test tubes and micro-chips must be accurate,

this is by no means always the case. An independent evaluation of three blood-pressure monitors found only one met standards specified by the British Hypertension Society.

Meanwhile, an investigation of Boots' cholesterol test by the Government's medical devices directorate concluded that it was "capable of giving accurate results when used by a trained professional [but] when used by the consumer the potential for obtaining incorrect results is increased".

Boots amended their test after this report but the British Heart Foundation remains concerned about the potential for mistakes. The biggest danger is a so-called "false negative" response. This means that a test has missed signs of potential disease and incorrectly suggested the person is healthy. It is not difficult to imagine someone carrying out a home test for signs of diabetes, misreading the results and, believing themselves to be in the clear, ignoring

symptoms like fatigue or increased thirst. In this scenario, the result of the test could actually be to delay effective treatment rather than bring it forward.

The tests can also offer false reassurance. A cholesterol test could, quite accurately, show that someone has an acceptable level. "But cholesterol is just one risk factor for heart disease," says Dr Murfin. "A good result could make people think they're not at risk even though they're eating badly, not exercising

enough and smoking 40 a day." Then there is the anxiety inevitably caused by a positive result. "The problem is that people can be testing themselves for what could be serious conditions," explains a spokeswoman for the British Medical Association.

"They could get frightening or worrying results and they don't have any information or support."

This is a key reason why HIV home-testing is prohibited in the UK. In some cases, moreover, the result will ultimately prove to be a "false positive" – in other words, further tests will reveal the person to be healthy. Although self-testing seems certain to grow and can be seen as another way in which we can take greater control over our own health, serious questions remain about its advisability. Until these are resolved, whether we choose to test ourselves or not, the best medical advice remains: if we are worried about our health, we should see a doctor.

DREAD DISEASE DETECTORS

Cholesterol Test (Boots, £7.99)

A high cholesterol level is a risk factor for heart disease. To use the device you prick your finger with a lancet and squeeze blood into a meter. However an inaccurate low result could provide false reassurance, so the British Heart Foundation says initial tests should be carried out only by a GP.

Blood pressure monitor (Digital monitors start at around £50)

Only one is approved by the British Hypertension Society – Omron's HEM 705 CP (£169.95). High blood pressure, usually symptomless, is a risk factor for heart disease. You attach a cuff to your wrist and read the display. The British Heart Foundation believes a monitor may be of use to people already known to have high blood pressure.

Urine test (Kent Pharmaceuticals, £7.95)

Urine abnormalities may signify diabetes, kidney and liver disease or urinary tract infections. The test, based on a hospital version, is done with a card held in the urine stream then compared to a coloured chart. The British Diabetic Association believes kits can be a preliminary way of detecting glucose intolerance but should not be relied upon for a diagnosis.

Blood in stools test (Kent Pharmaceuticals, £9.95)

Invisible traces of blood in faeces can signify bowel cancer and other diseases. A stick is dipped in a sample, placed in a bottle and the result is seen. The manufacturer claims 99 per cent accuracy. Colon Cancer Concern says a test will let individuals identify a problem needing treatment.

Body-fat monitor (Tanita, £89.99)

High levels can be a heart-disease risk factor. You stand on a device like a scales and it passes a minute current through your body, when your proportion of fat is displayed. Accuracy said to be plus or minus 5 per cent.

Great attractions including...

- CAT WALKS AND CANOES. From canoeing and sailing to the latest in cat walking.
- UP PERISCOPE! See what's going on in the world from the comfort of your caravan.
- GENTLY DOES IT. Enjoy the comfort of 24 hot water showers in the comfort of your caravan.
- STAY-DRY WATERSPORTS. Water skiing, windsurfing, and more water sports in the comfort of your caravan.
- LIKE TO TOW A CARAVAN? Learn how to tow a caravan, the safe way, on the water.
- FIGHTING FORCES. Enjoy the excitement of a military display.
- AWNING CHALLENGE. Test your awning skills.

CONQUER THE ICE KINGDOM. Enjoy the excitement of a military display.

FUN FOR THE KIDS. Enjoy the excitement of a military display.

CARAVAN NOSTALGIA. Enjoy the excitement of a military display.

LOVE TO COOK? Enjoy the excitement of a military display.

It's the show that's got the lot! Hundreds of Boats and Caravans, Holiday Homes, Tents, Awnings, Motor Homes and 4x4 vehicles. Holidays galore at home and abroad, crafts and accessories. It's the unmissable leisure show all the family can enjoy. So be there!

FREE PARKING

NATIONAL BOAT CARAVAN & LEISURE SHOW

National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham
14th-22nd February 1998
Open: 10:00am to 6:00pm weekdays, 10:00am to 7:00pm weekends.

'Look, mate, whether or not I'm a walking Oedipus complex is no concern of yours'

PHIL HAMMOND

"Morning doctor"
"Morning Mr Braithwaite. What can I do for you?"
"I'd like to be psycho-analysed please"
"Mphphph"
"Are you all right doctor?"
"I'm sorry. It's the central heating. So you want to be psycho-analysed?"
"Yes."
"Well, I'm sure that can be arranged."
"By you."

"Ah."
"Now."
"No."
"Why not?"
"Well, for a start I don't have a Viennese accent. Or a beard. Or a couch."
"Frankly I'm offended by your pejorative Hollywood stereotype."
"And also, I've only got six minutes per patient."
"Well you could make a start."
"Right... well... um..."
"You don't know how to do it, do you?"
"Have't the foggiest. How do you feel about that?"
"Oh, you're getting the hang of it now."
"No, I wasn't trying to..."
"You must be a natural then..."
"Look, the thing is, I don't feel I can psychoanalyse you because a) I haven't been trained to do it and b) I think it's bollocks."
"Oh dear. So you don't want to search for hidden meanings in my dreams and childhood memories?"
"Nope."
"And you don't want to peel off the onion-skin layers of my unconscious repression?"
"Definitely not."
"And you don't want me to transfer on to you?"
"You stay that side of the desk or I'll call security."
"It seems to me you're quite closed and hostile."
"What are you doing?"
"Since childhood, you've suffered a tremendous repression of jealousy of your father's sexual access to your mother..."
"Look, mate, whether or not I'm a walking Oedipus complex is no concern of yours."
"So you're familiar with Freud then?"
"Only enough to know he was no scientist. Most of his theories were pseudo-scientific rubbish. His experiments were on a handful of patients with no controls and he proved bog all. And there's no evidence that his psychoanalysis has any value in the treatment of psychological disturbance."
"What about Bertha Pappenheim?"
"What about her?"
"She was Freud's most famous patient. He psychoanalysed her. She had a cathartic reaction to her father's death and her hysterical symptoms disappeared."
"She didn't have hysteria, she had tubercular meningitis. Her symptoms returned soon after seeing Freud and she died shortly afterwards."
"I didn't know that."
"Freud did. But he carried on blathering on about unconscious impulses and their subtle expressions."
"Your stethoscope is a penis."
"Absolutely. Now if ..."
"But you haven't offered me any advice."
"Stop fretting around in the past, forget yesterday's emotions and concentrate on today's thoughts."
"Carry on. I like that."
"Learn to challenge and stamp out your automatic negative thoughts by seeing how unrealistic and irrational your predicament is."
"More, more..."
"This simple realisation will enable you to change your emotional state. Every thought you have effects your mood. So the more positive thoughts, the better you feel."
"Brilliant. What's it called?"
"Cognitive behavioural therapy. It's truly a therapy for the nineties..."
"Can I have some of that then?"
"Not yet. I haven't finished Dr Raj's book. Try me in a week's time."
"What do I do till then?"
"Um... just hang loose."
"Like a goose?"
"Like a positive thinking goose, with no repressed emotions."
"That sounds great."
"Doesn't it just?"

VITAL SIGNS

Noise is a source of stress, but different age groups react differently to the same noise. Background music in pubs and shops irritates almost a third of the over 55s but bothers only 6 per cent of those under 35.

Crying babies, on the other hand, drive a third of 16- to 24-year-olds to distraction but worries only 8 per cent of those over 55.

The survey, for Lanes, a manufacturer of natural health care products, found one in five people are upset by neighbours quarrelling and almost one in three by the noise of traffic. But top of the list, as the most disturbing noise of all, came the was barking of dogs.

Fungal infections of the fingernails and toenails are estimated to affect over one million people in the UK. The condition, which is unsightly, can be painful and can cause disintegration of the nail. Creams and ointments are of limited use and oral drugs have to be taken for three months and in some cases up to 12 months.

A new drug treatment, called Sporanox-Pulse, now offers the shortest treatment course lasting nine weeks, with the drugs themselves taken for a maximum of three weeks. A pulse is a seven-day course of pills followed by a three-week drug holiday. Available only on prescription.

A cancer treatment extracted from a marine organism is being developed as a treatment. Curacin A has the potential to stop cell division, the means by which cancer grows, but is unstable with a short life span at room temperature. It is in short supply and difficult to harvest.

— Jeremy Lawrence



It's a flat, flat world: a typical 'illustration for Beginners' guide to bathers' body-language in 'Eleuthera', 1984 (above); more clichéd tricks from the photo-realist illustrator's handbook in 'Red Coat', 1982 Photographs: The Saatchi Gallery, London

All at face value and nothing left to the imagination

The art of Alex Katz is all very familiar, all very 'cool'. But surely there's more to life than this?

Ah, a Sunday afternoon at the Saatchi Gallery! What a subject for Seurat! Look – the toddlers and the huggies and the couples – the ladies and gentlemen in their discreetly expensive leisure-wear – this is surely London's brighter bourgeoisie *en promenade*, the Sunday papers walking. Yes, it's often struck me that the Saatchi Gallery of a weekend provides one of those playgrounds for class solidarity that the modern "town" is generally short of: a public place you can go, confident of meeting "people like us", people who are strangers but your kind of people, with whom you share life-styles, world-views and worries, and might share a glance or a smile, get talking to, and find out you have mutual friends or business in common, or just bask in the knowledge that you're safely among peers. Or equally, a subject for Alex Katz, the painter now showing at the Saatchi Gallery.

Katz is 60 and lives on America's East Coast. He paints people (though latterly many landscapes too) and he paints very big pictures. He paints sometimes single figures, sometimes group tableaux, incidents of everyday life, at parties, on the beach, in the office or the café, images that, though large, are close-up and tightly cropped. Victorian-minded viewers, looking for busy anecdote, won't have much joy from these scenes: the gestures and expressions here are muted, the stories are inexplicit. Like-wise brush-fanciers, for the painting is flat and inexpressive. A word very often attached to Katz's work is "cool".

A swift eye might use harsher words. The drawing is wooden. The transitions from light to shade are implausibly jumpy. Eyes and mouths refuse to stick themselves to their faces. Hands are never quite right. Every trick – the folds of clothing, the streaking of hair, the rendering of a rain drip or blade of grass – is completely formulaic. Every effect is an *Illustration for Beginners* cliché, briskly managed. If you don't see sheer incompetence here, you're likely to detect irony.

In fact, trying to think what these images were most like, I hit on the illustrations to Cyra McFadden's *The Serial*, that charming satirical novella about life in Marin County, California, in the 1970s. Wrong coast, but near enough to Katz in period and mores; and many of the scenes – people hanging out in a leisurely way and having slightly awkward encounters – look very like Katz's. *The Serial*'s illustrations (by Tom Cerveau) were done in photorealism *manqué*, a style that declared its aims, the kind of look it was after, while always failing to make it – just as (this seemed to be the point) the people in the story are always striving to have "real" lives, but failing too.

But those Cerveau pictures were themselves parodies of really low-grade illustrations, the sort that go with serials and short stories in women's magazines – done in the most perfunctory photo-manner, that doesn't even try to simulate a photo, just nods at the form of realism everyone knows. Katz works initially from life, but this photo-derived box of illustrational tricks is the basic style he uses, his home key. It's not ironic.

It's a deliberately limited style, of course, one that's self-conscious about being a style, a repertoire of clear, crude formulas. But one can't call it a parody. Rather, Katz brings it to a surprising intensity. He flattens it further and fills it out with fields of powerful, occasionally beautiful colour. He stresses and isolates his illustrational devices to give them their full say, to allow their elementary artifice a naïve directness – believe it, this brown arc is an eyebrow,



this plainly outlined red shape with a stroke of highlight is a mouth.

Partly it's an effect of scale: greatly magnified, the mechanism of these devices is nakedly obvious; partly it comes from added formalisation (the way, for instance, he makes the meeting of lips or the edge of a neck into a perfectly straight line); partly from the bold and flattened colour. This array of bog-standard representational formulae is exposed and re-enforced and heightened, so as to achieve an iconic authority. What's missing in psychological depth is made up for in calm, blank mystery.

It's the mystery of face values absolutely accepted. Katz's painting insists that pictorial conventions are all we've got; and

is the way we live, this is normal. And it's important that Katz's mysteriousness over becomes actually puzzling. The world and its ways must be recognised as familiar.

So his human tableaux are dumb, but always articulable. We don't know exactly what's going on late at the office in *Thursday Night*, but we can well imagine the kind of thing, we can make up the relevant short story if we can be bothered. (Edward Hopper's *Office at Night*, by contrast, is filled with an air of enigma that no story could explain.) Again, with the three women caught at a doubtful moment at a drinks party in *Trio*, or the sunbathers exchanging unreadable glances in *Round Hill*: make it up if you want. These are people like us, the sort of scenes we might have snapped ourselves.

But this take is simply not true, and no amount of iconic emphasis can make it so. One may honour the attempt to represent contemporary Western existence absolutely on its own terms, while perhaps demurring at the way the life of surface appearances can be promoted to an existential heroism (Hey, this is all we are, we moderns – flat souls, actors, behaviors, signifiers, nothing more – and we fearlessly embrace our condition without nostalgia; our flatness is something rather grand). But the important falsity of the visio is its lack of tension. Even face values are not just a given. They too have to be lived up to, and one can fail to do so, sometimes miserably.

I don't criticise Katz for being deficient in a more common form of existential heroism, howling anguish. I merely come back to Cyra McFadden's *The Serial* and the way it shows its characters trying hard to live their chill-out, hang-loose life-styles and finding that they've only landed themselves with another lot of norms, different from their parents', yes, but ultimately, like all norms, not workable without some strain, dishonesty and grief. That sense of strain is what Katz's work eliminates, utterly and emphatically denies. Everything in this world is just so.

It's something you may also feel as you stroll round the Saatchi Gallery on a Sunday afternoon. But you know very well it just isn't. To 12 April, Saatchi Gallery, 98a Boundary Road, London NW8 (0171-624 8299)

'Whose realism is it anyway?'

"Everything in paint that's representational is false – because it's not representational, it's paint... The way I paint, realistic, is out of abstract painting as opposed to abstract style. So I use a line, a form and a colour. So my contention is that my paintings are as realistic as Rembrandt's. Now, that's supposed to be realistic, but I don't see those dark things around it, I don't see those dark things anywhere. It [Rembrandt's art] was realistic painting in its time. It's no longer re-

alistic painting. Realism's a variable. "For an artist, this is the highest thing an artist can do – to make something that's real for his time, where he lives. But people don't see it as realistic, they see it as abstract. But for me it's realistic. I mean, do those Impressionist paintings actually look realistic?"

"You open Pandora's box when you start off with that. Then you say: Well, then what is realistic? Then I say: Well, maybe my things are as realistic as the

next guy's. Giacometti is very realistic, but for his time and place. It's not very realistic in my time and place.

"It has nothing to do with the quality of the art. It's the quality of the vision. And when paintings somehow are no longer realistic, they often become great art."

Taken from an interview with Alex Katz by David Sylvester, as published in the Saatchi Gallery's catalogue to its current exhibition

SEND A VALENTINE MESSAGE TO YOUR LOVED ONE AND YOU COULD WIN A WEEKEND FOR TWO AT HENLOW GRANGE HEALTH FARM!



Once again this year THE INDEPENDENT will be publishing your romantic, mysterious, funny and just plain daft messages to your loved one. In time for Valentines day we will send on your behalf an anonymous card informing them to look for their personal message in The Independent on Saturday.

The best and most original message published in The Independent will win a wonderful weekend for two at HENLOW GRANGE HEALTH FARM in Bedfordshire with a runner-up prize of a "Top To Toe" day for two.

All you have to do now is compose your message and follow the instructions below, then start to dream of a full body massage, facial, indoor swimming pool, whirlpool, sauna, steam room, plunge pool, gym and a relaxation programme...and of course a well earned meal!

YOUR DETAILS (in capitals)

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Daytime Telephone No. _____

YOUR VALENTINE'S DETAILS (in capitals)

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Daytime Telephone No. _____

Write your message above and tick your option (all prices inclusive of VAT) If in a foreign language please attach English translation.

8 words for £9.95 + extra words at £1.25 each
3cm x 1 column box advert for £30
As above plus extra centimetres at £5 each

I enclose a cheque made payable to Newspaper Publishing PLC, or please debit for the amount of £_____
my Visa/Mastercard/AMEX number: _____ expiry date: _____
Post this coupon to The Independent Valentine, Classified Dept, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL
or telephone 001 293 2000 between 9.30 - 5.30pm Monday to Friday.

ALL MESSAGES TO BE RECEIVED BY 12 NOON WEDNESDAY 11th FEBRUARY.

If you do not wish to be sent details on products or services as recommended by The Independent please tick here ☐

The jury's verdict damned the lottery regulator, too



EDITOR: ROSIE BOYCOTT
DEPUTY EDITOR: CHRIS BLACKHURST
ADDRESS: 1 CANADA SQUARE,
CANARY WHARF,
LONDON E14 5DL
TELEPHONE: 0171 293 2000
OR 0171 345 2000
FAX: 0171 293 2435
OR 0171 345 2435

Richard Branson's victory in court yesterday was one of those rare events which unite the lowliest and the highest in the land. It ought to command as much attention in Downing Street (and those adjacent regions where the Dome project is being managed) as in the neighbourhood newsagent selling tickets for tomorrow's draw. The National Lottery, its prize, its winners, its proceeds, its extravaganzas have been a deep source of national interest (and amusement) during the past four years. Now the Branson libel trial has cast new light on mechanics that most people are happy to take for granted – the organisation of draws and prizes and their regulation on behalf of the state. The verdict in his favour not only puts in doubt the probity of one of the principal partners in the consortium running the enterprise but the effectiveness of the regulator, Oflot. Mr Branson asserts that the watchdog has failed. The jury believed him. As a result, a precious element of

public trust in a great public enterprise is in danger of being lost.

It would be wrong (and inconsistent) of us, long-time critics of the libel law) to put too much weight on a single courtroom drama. Yesterday the jury believed Richard Branson. He cuts a very attractive figure, a walking advertisement for business as buccaneering fun. In this playlet he was cast against an overpaid American, Guy Snowden. Yet it is more than personal. The jury decided that over the National Lottery there hangs a miasma of doubt and dishonesty. In short, the thing smells.

A peculiar odour attaches to the way the contract to run the lottery was granted by the Conservatives. After Mr Branson's victory we need to ask again why wasn't his bid to run the thing as a not-for-profit operation not accepted. The answer is not graft. Whatever else they are, the former Tory ministers Peter Brooke and Virginia Bottomley were not bribe-takers. The true answer is probably worse.

They were ministers in a government which, however much it said it had left behind the dogmatic certainties of Thatcherism, remained imprisoned in her ideological cage. Worse, they failed to see that the pursuit of profit in monopolistic markets demands the strictest regulation.

A nasty smell thus attaches to the man the Tories put in to guarantee the public interest, Peter Davis of Oflot. The fact that he has been examined and found wanting by the Public Accounts Committee makes things worse. That Mr Davis commissioned a senior lawyer to investigate Mr Branson's charges against Oflot looks in retrospect to be even more ill-advised than it seemed at the time. When Mr Branson refused to cooperate (because he had no confidence in Mr Davis as a regulator because of his admitted acceptance of Oflot's hospitality) Mr Davis should have considered his position.

He did not then but really ought to go now. And if he won't go before his con-

tract expires in the autumn, that at least gives the Government an opportunity to think deeply about how to rectify the mistakes made by the Tories. Tony Blair and Peter Mandelson surely understand that if the processes of public gambling get tainted, the good causes it is supposed to benefit are harmed, too. Peter Davis never seemed to realise that his perceived proximity to the commercial interests hurt the charities receiving the proceeds of the Lottery. It won't do to say that the everyday punter is concerned only about odds and prize money. The role of the regulator ought to have been that of an assurance mechanism, guaranteeing the fairness and above-board nature of the enterprise. That public faith is in jeopardy.

Unless Labour ministers use the Branson imbroglio as an occasion to regroup. They have a problem in winning public approval of the lottery-funded Dome. It is in their own interests – let alone those of the public – to make Oflot a muscular

agency of public purpose. Margaret Beckett, Secretary for Trade and Industry, has been reviewing the operations of the regulators overseeing gas, electricity and water. Typical of British government's enervating departmentalism has been the way in which this review has failed to look across the experience in telecommunications and gambling regulation. Taking the new regulators together, we now know a lot about the kind of personality and the kind of structure that ensures effective and fair regulation of monopolistic industries. Regulators have to do more than sit back and let the wheels turn. Peter Davis appears to have failed even to begin to inquire into the commercial background of the entities of the Camelot consortium. That lesson must be absorbed, and applied elsewhere. Regulators must be energetic, all-seeing, unafraid – and extremely careful about offers to pay for their plane tickets coming from fat-cat Americans judged in court to be liars.

Post letters to Letters to the Editor
and include a daytime telephone number.
Fax 0171 293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk
E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address.
Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

LETTERS

EU policy on Iraq

It does seem perverse that Great Britain, while currently chairing the Presidency of the European Union, one of whose most pressing treaty obligations is the Common European Foreign and Security Policy, should, uniquely, be so closely associated with the policy of the American administration towards Iraq.

Given that the previous Gulf War alliance no longer pertains and in order to oblige Saddam Hussein to permit the UN inspectors to carry out their mandate, the British government could usefully broker a united European diplomatic and, if needs be, military position. CHRISTOPHER BEAZLEY
Nettlebed, Oxfordshire

Weapons investigations in Iraq must be done by an objective and skilled team of experts from a number of countries. A United Nations team in reality and not just in name. Since US members of the team are not acceptable to Saddam Hussein, alternative experts should be used.

If a newly constituted team was accepted, this could be a face-saving move for both sides. If it was not accepted, this could not damage or change the present situation. If the United Nations was prepared to take such action, it would prove that it was not entirely dominated by the United States.

An alternative would be for the US to withdraw voluntarily from the inspection teams, not as a sign of weakness but as a gesture of confidence in the weapons inspection as an objective process and not a political manoeuvre. PATRICIA KNOWLES
Selly Oak, Birmingham

The value of nurses

Peter Fisher (letter, 29 January) makes a welcome contribution to the debate on the recruitment crisis of the nursing profession. However, he is in danger of perpetuating the myth of nurses as caring but simple creatures in need of little sustenance or rewards other than those intrinsic in helping others.

The question of pay is, in fact, central to the problem. Nurses are a highly trained, disciplined, hard-working, legally accountable and successfully self-regulating profession who

routinely save and enhance the lives of their fellow human beings, working the sort of hours and in the kind of environments most other professionals could scarcely imagine, let alone tolerate.

Initial training combines intensive study with demanding clinical placements. Subsequent training is compulsory in order to re-register every three years, yet this is often undertaken without the financial support of employers. General nursing has seen the advent of extra responsibilities passed on from the medical profession and, in my field of mental health nursing, we have taken on board a succession of new legislation and initiatives such as Care in the Community and the Care Programme Approach, for no extra pay.

In this light, it is with some bitterness that we see the Government contemplating the continued systematic impoverishment of nurses by setting the latest pay rise below the

rate of inflation. It has always been understood that no one will make their fortune in nursing, but the Government's latest plans give out the clear message that the work we do is simply not valued. JULES AKERS
Stockport, Cheshire

An old musical battle

Most musicians would agree with Julian Lloyd Webber on the frightfulness of mid-20th century concert halls and the desirability of television spots for young performers, but in the tonality vs modernism debate he is fighting old battles ("Stop the dictators of modern music", 2 February).

My local CD shops shift much more Gorecki than Birtwistle and Ferneyhough. Last Sunday John Adams' *Nixon in China* got a complete concert performance at the Barbican. ENO is mounting an opera by Gavin Bryars later in the year. John Tavener seems

ubiquitous. And who gets to represent the world of music to the movers and shakers in Davos? Pierre Boulez? György Kurtág? Thomas Ades, perhaps, for the younger generation? Er, no. Julian Lloyd Webber, actually. If the "die-hard radicals" really are running a dictatorship, then they should keep a tighter lid on their dissidents. MARTIN PICKARD
Leeds

Protecting wetlands

Yesterday, three new Ramsar sites – internationally important wetlands – were announced, to mark the occasion of World Wetlands Day (report, 2 February) and, no doubt, to demonstrate the Government's commitment to protecting wetlands.

This commitment will soon be tested over plans to develop part of the Thames Marshes. Rainham Marsh is the largest remaining fragment of grazing

marsh in London and is vitally important for a wide range of wildlife. It is subject to a planning application from English Partnerships, the Government's regeneration agency, for 90 hectares of unspecified commercial development. If the application is successful, it will be the largest single loss of a protected site in England since the wildlife law that should protect it was passed in 1981.

The proposed development would be a scandalous misuse of public money with, we understand, at least £16m being spent to put a nationally valuable wildlife site under concrete. It would completely overturn the Government's commitment to enhance and recreate grazing marsh as part of the UK's Biodiversity Action Plan and is opposed by the Government's own statutory advisers, English Nature and the Environment Agency.

The decision as to whether or not this national wildlife treasure will be lost for ever will be the

Deputy Prime Minister's. Allowing it to be lost would destroy our government's environmental credibility. To allow the development to proceed with government money would compound the error. We call upon the Deputy Prime Minister to remain true to the manifesto promise to hire the environment to the heart of all policy. BARBARA YOUNG
Chief Executive, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
CHARLES SECRET
Executive Director, Friends of the Earth
SIMON LYSTER
Director General, The Wildlife Trust
Sandy, Bedfordshire

Rural contentment

May I reply to Philip Resheph's letter (28 January)? As an over-subsidised country denizen and Post Office pensioner, I would not dream of marching anywhere, let alone to London. I have long reflected

on the source of wealth which allows me a modest lifestyle and just about keeps me in food and debt free.

I have also reflected over the years on the amounts of milk, meat, poultry, fruit, flowers, wheat for bread, hops for beer, and barley for whisky which are carted daily from countryside to city and, annoyingly, often cost less there. As coal and aggregates are transported from the countryside, I have reflected on the acres of dereliction and desertification caused by open-cast coal mining and quarrying to supply energy and building materials, mostly for people in the cities.

I came to the conclusion years ago that we are all dependent on each other, that country dwelling gives more time for serious observation, and that it is better to be a contented yokel than a bitter bigot.

OLIVE WHELDON
Coalville, Leicestershire

In the 1951 dome

To answer your learned enquirers as to what was in the Dome of Discovery of 1951 (letters, 28 and 31 January), my official guide (costing 2/6d) shows that the display was divided into eight areas.

These were: the Land ("exploration leading to development of overseas territories"); the Earth ("science revealing the age and structure of the Earth; technology developing its underground resources"); Polar ("a great tradition applied particularly to scientific discovery and aided by mechanisation"); Sea ("the great heritage of Drake and Cook passed to the marine scientists who are yearly adding to our knowledge of the sea"); Sky ("weather forecasting and research and the exploration into the ionosphere, which improves long-distance radio communication"); Outer Space ("what we have learned from the old astronomy of Newton and from the new astronomy which uses radio methods"); the Physical World ("explorations into the nature and behaviour of matter that have made possible many of the material achievements of the present age"); and the Living World ("discoveries of the secrets of life, Darwin's great influence in the world of thought and contemporary biological research").

On the South Bank site there were also exhibition pavilions and displays including television, telecinema, the 1851 exhibition and 25,000 photographs illustrating the wide range of British manufacturers. LES ROERG
Braintree, Essex

Double-edged rights

As you say (leading article, 2 February), women still experience discrimination in the area of capital punishment, being far less likely than men to suffer it. As it happens, Olympe de Gouges, the early French feminist, not only noticed but opposed this fact. In the *Declaration of Rights of Woman and Citizeness*, which she published in 1791. Articles 7-10 insist that women have the same right as men not only to make laws but to suffer under them. And two years later she did so herself, being guillotined during the Reign of Terror. JEAN RAISON
London N19

The wise man was no fool. He knew that I would buy what he had to sell



MILES KINGSTON

"Time is elastic," said the man in the pub to me. "Time is elastic. Know what that means?"

I try to discourage people in pubs from talking to me. The method I choose is to engage them in conversation and bore them so much that they just go away.

"Yes, I know what it means," I said.

This surprised him. What I was meant to say was something like, No, I have no idea what it means, please tell me the mystery of time, o wise stranger in a pub ...

"Go on, then, tell me," he said. "Tell me what it means that time is elastic."

"It means that after a while time goes hard and wrinkled instead of being supple and

stretchy, and breaks when you pull at it."

His face spread into a smile when he realised that I was trying to be funny. People who are trying to be funny can always be defeated by people who are trying to be boring.

"No, what I mean by time being elastic is that people no longer live in the present. We live in the past and future simultaneously."

I said nothing, meaning that he had not got to the interesting bit yet.

"We do not think it odd to be planning for someone's birthday in two weeks' time and at the same time reading a history of World War I."

"These days you wouldn't be reading a history of World War

I," I said. "You'd be reading a novel about it. Have you noticed that everyone from Sebastian Faulks to Pat Barker is writing novels about World War I? And nobody is writing them about World War II? Why do you suppose that is?"

For a moment, he paused, and then decided it would be more fun to go on with his own train of thought.

"Anyway, you get the point that we exist in the past and future as well as the present. For instance, the Millennium is in the future – but it celebrates the past as well! You couldn't have AD 2000 without AD 0!"

He was interrupted at this point by the landlord leaning forward, tapping him on the shoulder and pointing to a big

notice behind him. It was headed "UP-TO-DATE SCHEDULE OF CONVERSATIONAL TOPICS WHICH ARE TOTALLY BARRED FROM THIS PUBS and on the list, along with Princess Diana, *The Full Monty*, *The Eurovision Song Contest* and Dame Elton John, it said The Millennium.

"Put it another way," said the man. "We are constantly preoccupied with what has not yet happened or with what is over and done with. We know that next summer will be warm and the grass will grow ..."

"Maybe, but I don't let that govern my behaviour," I said. "You should," he said. "You should be booking your summer holiday now and putting your lawn mower in for an overhaul."

Uncanny. It was exactly what my wife had said the day before.

"Go on," I said, getting interested despite myself. "Now, people get their mowers serviced in the winter because they wait for summer, they will find the garden machinery people are all busy servicing mowers. So they get their mowers serviced in winter for the summer to come. Right?"

"Wrong," I said. "If everyone does that, then they'll find that the garden machinery people are all busy in winter, and free in summer."

"Nowadays we live partly in the past and partly in the future," he said, ignoring me. "We are used to TV and radio repeats. We are used to seeing

sports highlights being immediately repeated in slow motion. We are used to seeing new films come out a year later as a new videos. We live in an age of déjà vu. Time is becoming elastic ..."

"I have an uncanny feeling that I have heard parts of this conversation before somewhere," I said.

"Give you another example," he said. "When summer comes, we all say that it's Pimms time, but when we go to the shops to buy some Pimms, there's none there. Why not?"

"Because it's Pimms time, and people have bought it all."

"Exactly. The right time to buy Pimms is in wintertime!"

"That's the first sensible thing you've said," I said. "Next time I go into a wine shop,

I'll stock up on Pimms."

"No need," he said. "I've got a case in the car. I'll let you have it at a very advantageous rate."

Somewhat bemused, I found myself the owner a few minutes later of a case of Pimms.

"It's a joy to watch him at work," said the landlord to me. "What a salesman."

As I left the pub, fugging a crate of Pimms, I overheard the man saying to a couple sitting by the fireplace, "Time is elastic, did you know that? Yes, time is elastic! Know what that means?"

I had an extraordinary feeling that I had heard this conversation somewhere before, and that I didn't want to hear it again.

John Hinde

John Wilfrid Hinde, photographer: born Street, Somerset 17 May 1916; FRPS 1943; married 1952 Antonia Fainoga (three sons, two daughters); died Brive en Galar, France 26 December 1997.

John Hinde was one of the pioneers of colour photography in England and a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society before he was 30 years old. He also founded a picture postcard empire which, when he sold it in 1972, could boast 50 million sales world-wide. These two achievements involved him, if not in a double life, then in a double aesthetic: the one a new and sensitive naturalism in printing and reproducing colour, the other a surreal intensification of colour – "that extra oomph" which, he said, made postcards attractive.

He was born into a Quaker (later Christian Scientist) family, a great-grandson of James Clark who, with his brother Cyrus, founded Clark's Shoes. As a child, he contracted an illness which left him partially disabled, but he was fascinated by photography and already experimenting with colour photographs while he was at school.

After being apprenticed to the family firm, and articled to a Bristol architect, J. Ralph Edwards, Hinde went to study colour photographic printing at the Reimann School in London with Frank Newens, a leader in colour printing in England at that time. In 1939, he set up his

own photographic studio in London, learnt more about colour photography and its reproduction in Germany, and in 1941, began to work for Adprint, a firm of "publisher's producers" who were Jewish refugees, mostly from Austria. Before the Second World War, beautifully illustrated books had been produced in Austria, whereas in England colour reproduction was in its infancy.

While Hinde was working for Adprint, he photographed for "Britain in Pictures", a series published by William Collins, and another called "The Garden in Colour" by T.C. Mansfield. In *Roses in Colour and Cultivation* (1943), Mansfield described Hinde's problems and patience photographing fractious and intractable roses under studio lights, when "buds would open; petals would fall; stamens would wither". It was his infinitely patient attention to detail, to the importance of getting the photograph exactly right, as well as his mastery of photographic technique, which were the hallmarks of Hinde's work throughout his career. Mansfield also emphasised that they had not in any way exaggerated or intensified colours, something which was to be the very opposite of Hinde's later aesthetic in postcards to appeal to a mass audience.

In the 1940s, Hinde wanted to make perfect colour photographs. It was a laborious process; there were no laboratories, and it took a day and a half to make a print with the three-colour carbro process.



'That extra oomph': City of London Policeman - postcard from the John Hinde Studios with the colour 'turned up'

But the production of the colour photograph was only the start: its reproduction was equally important. He persuaded Adprint to allow him to supervise the making of the printing blocks and to be present with the printer, when he set up his machines, feeling that printers and blockmakers had no idea how to handle colour photographs, and that colour reproductions were, all too often, like a piece of music badly played.

Citizens in War and After (1945), *Exmoor Village* (1947) and *British Circus Life* (1948) show the sensitivity he could bring to colour reproduction.

Even *The Small Caravan* (1947), in which he photographed a pink-and-white striped shape rising from a pastel necklace of stewed apples, dried apricots and prunes, is a little gem.

From 1949, John Hinde's life took another turn: having jointly written and photographed *British Circus Life* (1948), he worked promoting Chipperfield's and Bertram Mills' circuses, where he met his wife, Antonia, known as Jutta, a trapeze artist, and briefly had his own travelling show.

In 1957, changing direction yet again, he sold his first six views of Ireland at Shannon air-

port, printing them at the outset with a modified Rotaprint office duplicating machine. So began John Hinde Ltd, a postcard empire, which established his name from County Galway to Blackpool, from Butlin's Fife to Bognor Regis, and from London to the Canaries.

Among photographers, the postcards are fashionably renowned as "constructed" photographs: their planted foreground flowers, inserted, dramatic sunsets or Mediterranean skies, emboldened colours, which could turn Torquay into a sun-soaked Riviera or Ballinskelligs Bay into a bright turquoise

pond, floating beyond a fuchsia hedge, offer holiday happiness with the colour "turned up".

In 1994, the Irish Museum of Modern Art toured an exhibition of Hinde's work, "Hindesight", to the Royal Photographic Society in Bath. But his earlier work, even though displayed in these hallowed halls, has been forever eclipsed by the 50 million postcards, and it is probably as an ancestral voice to the work of Martin Parr, whose photographs are in a sense an extended ironic commentary on the vivid, holiday genre, that Hinde's style will be remembered.

— Jacqueline Sarsby

Brendan Gill

Brendan Gill, journalist: born Hartford, Connecticut 4 October 1914; staff writer, *New Yorker* 1936-97; married 1936 Anne Barnard (two sons, five daughters); died New York 27 December 1997.

Brendan Gill was associated with the *New Yorker* virtually from its inception.

Born and raised in comfortable circumstances to Irish-Catholic parents in Connecticut, Gill attended Yale University, where he first displayed the traits of a truly social animal, immune to the ethnic prejudice that lingered. He was so popular, in fact, that he was "tapped" for Skull and Bones, the grandest of Yale's "Secret Societies" – which are hush-hush undergraduate versions of the grander clubs on St James's. Leaving university, Gill began contributing short stories to the fledgling *New Yorker* and soon, at the ripe age of 22, became a staff writer, a position he held for over 61 years.

Now in many ways indistinguishable from its commercial competitors, the *New Yorker* was once home for America's finest writing talents. The writers involved were maverick and highly individual; there was little commonality of character between, say, E.B. White, James Thurber, and Dorothy Parker. Yet the diversity of the magazine's contents – "Talk of the

part in defending its landmarks, and most memorably helped Jacqueline Onassis lead a successful fight to preserve Grand Central Station.

Of Gill's several biographies, perhaps the best is *Mary Masks* (1987), his life of Frank Lloyd Wright, with whom he established a close friendship, despite the manifest contrast between the awkward midwestern visionary and the suave Easterner author. His more social side is seen in *Tallulah* (1972), his biography of Tallulah Bankhead, which, like its subject, is slight but entertaining, and in *Cole* (1971), the life of the musical composer Cole Porter, whose vitality was perfectly matched by the chronicler. A life of Charles Lindbergh, *Lindbergh Alone* (1977), is duller, but proved a best-seller.

Of Gill's 15 books, few remain in print, and unsurprisingly it is *Here at the New Yorker* (1975) for which he will be best remembered – as well as for the length of his association with the magazine, since, uniquely, he worked under all four of its editors. Gill's history of the magazine was enormously successful and remains a marvellous read, full of anecdote and often brilliant pen portraits of the many artists and writers (some flaky, some not; all talented) who graced 25 West 43rd Street.

The book was not without its detractors, however, who found in Gill's bouncy account a smug self-satisfaction that grated and struck them as undeserved. Some of his views of *New Yorker* colleagues seemed patronising, and inappropriately so. Lamenting John O'Hara's social insecurity (apparently exacerbated by his fellow Catholic's manifest social success), Gill seems unable to recognise O'Hara's considerable gifts as a novelist, perhaps out of his own well-suppressed jealousy. More damaging was his treatment of the *New Yorker's* founder Harold Ross.

Ross was an aggressively ignorant man, with a head full of odd scraps of information and misinformation and with little experience of the arduous discipline of taking thought... He was rumoured to have read only one book all the way through – a stout volume on sociology by Herbert Spencer, the truth was that he had read other books, but not many.

This completely ignores the fact that only Ross's perseverance and eye for talent established the magazine as a cultural nonpareil. As Ross's biographer Thomas Kunkel makes clear in *Genius in Disguise* (1995), few members of the magazine's staff were fooled by Ross's playing the fool – except, ostensibly, Brendan Gill.

But it is hard to take lasting offence at a man always ready to mock his own mild self-conceit as well as make fun of others: "Even when I am caught out and made a fool of," he once confessed, "I manage to twist this circumstance about until it becomes a proof of how exceptional I am."

— Andrew Rosenheim



Gill: convivial

Town reports, extraordinary long profiles, short stories, arts reviews, poetry, even racing and golf reports – none the less projected a unified impression of urbanity, wit, and grace, magnified by its origin in what was then America's hub of cosmopolitan values, New York.

Gill's early efforts for the magazine were short stories, but he rapidly found his true métier as a non-fiction writer, contributing profiles, book reviews, and countless "Talk of the Town" pieces – the latter, in a pre-blythe era, inevitably anonymous. He particularly excelled as a rewrite man, and gave a consistency in tone to the "Talk" pieces which greatly contributed to the magazine's editorial voice.

His interests were predominantly social and architectural (and often a productive blend of both) and were both firmly rooted in the city of New York. A fierce defender of Gotham's heritage, he took a high-profile

Harold Robeson, inventor, died Atlanta, Georgia 27 January, aged 72. Developed an anti-theft device which sprays red dye on bank robbers.

Ho Ming-teh, engineer, died Chiayi, Taiwan 1 February, aged

77. His Buddhist-inspired movement built more than 200 bridges in remote areas of Taiwan. S.P. Leary, drummer, died Chicago 26 January, aged 67. Blues drummer with Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters.

Ionius

Joshua Charles Armitage ("Ionius"), artist and cartoonist: born Hoylake, Cheshire 29 September 1913; married 1939 Catherine Buckle (died 1988; two daughters); died Hoylake, Merseyside 29 January 1998.

J. C. Armitage ("Ionius") was one of the few remaining "realistic" artist-cartoonists. His beautifully crafted and detailed drawings appeared in *Punch* for 40 years and contrasted sharply with the over-simplified style of a newer generation.

Armitage was born and died in Hoylake, Merseyside. After attending Liverpool School of Art, he taught at the Wallasey School of Art, before volunteering for the Royal Navy in 1940. Although pronounced colour-blind by a service medical (a strange diagnosis in view of his subsequent success with the palette), he spent some time in minesweepers before becoming a naval gunnery instructor in Liverpool.

He was a small, elfin-like, unassuming man, albeit with a permanent twinkle in his eye. When his first cartoon appeared in *Punch*, on 29 March 1944, he wanted a *nom de plume* to distinguish his light-hearted work from his more serious oil painting; because the cartoon contained a couple of ionic columns he plumped for "Ionius". The name emphasised his key interest in things architectural, as evinced by his skill in depicting



'It's no use ringing - they're away': cartoon by Ionius from Punch, 1953

urban backgrounds. His cartoons are somewhere between Acanthus, who also drew architecture, and the political cartoonist Norman Mansbridge.

In all he contributed 358 drawings – illustrations and title decorations as well as cartoons – right up to 1984. He also drew a final cover for the new *Punch* in 1996, which showed Mr Punch, the "new" arrival, at a railway station. He was a prolific illustrator of children's books, and produced

many colour covers for the local *Dalesman*, as well as 50 covers for the P.G. Wodehouse paperback published by Penguin.

His main hobby was golf, and his illustrations for Peter Doherty's final, posthumous book, *Well, I'll Be Deemed* (1996), were serialised in the *Independent on Sunday*. After a lifetime membership of the Royal Liverpool Golf Club, he hung up his clubs at Christmas.

— David Langdon

Edwin Wainwright

Edwin Wainwright, miner and politician: born Wombwell, South Yorkshire 12 August 1908; BEM 1957; MP (Labour) for Dearne Valley 1959-83; Secretary, Parliamentary Labour Party Trade Union Group 1966-83; married 1938 Dorothy Metcalfe (two sons, two daughters); died Wombwell 22 January 1998.

There is no better way for a young Member of Parliament, newly arrived in the House of Commons, to get to know his colleagues than serving with them on an interesting Standing Committee on a House of Commons Bill. In the spring of 1964, Eddie Wainwright and I served on the committee stage of the first Continental Shelf Bill, which was to do with a little gas which had been found in the North Sea and some uncertain North Sea oil prospects.

Wainwright was an extremely effective member of the committee – which included the then Minister of Fuel and Power, Freddy Erroll, the expert Col C.G. Lancaster, Angus Maude, Norman Pentland, John Payton, Jim Prior, Sir Frank Soskice, later Home Secretary, and William Whitelaw. It was a measure of the homework that he did in those days and his deep interest in all matters to do with fuel and power that Wainwright succeeded in cutting ice on the committee stage. He anticipated many of the future problems:

We must appreciate that the developers will not be searching for oil for the benefit of the nation alone. Obviously they will have the interests of their shareholders and owners at heart. The question therefore of who is to receive the benefit is very important. We must also bear in mind that the developers, by virtue of the risks which they take in finding oil, must receive some reward for taking that risk.

In those civilised days, at the conclusion of the Bill, the minister had a drinks party for colleagues of all parties who had taken part. I remember Erroll, not only a cabinet minister but a formidable businessman, thanking Wainwright most charmingly for his many interventions from which, said Erroll, he had learnt a lot. Those were days when ministers would listen seriously to those who had first-hand experience of industry, albeit they might not share their general political view.

Edwin Wainwright was born into a mining family and started



Wainwright: effective

work at Darfield Main Colliery in 1922, two days after his 14th birthday. He understood the value of technical knowhow in the mining industry and worked to improve himself on and off at Barnsley Technical College.

In the mid-1930s, he became an active member of the Branch Committee of the National Union of Mineworkers, and in 1939 started his 20-year experience as a local councillor – his knowledge of local government was often of great assistance in House of Commons committees.

In October 1959, he was rewarded with the Dearne Valley seat. His main political contribution – and it was a very considerable one – was as Secretary of the Trade Union Group of the Parliamentary Labour Party, for 17 years, 1966-83, when he was also Secretary of the Yorkshire Group. This was an era when both groups mattered far more than they do today.

Wainwright gained a reputation for being fond of beer and the Commons bar. It was not unfair. However, from my personal experience, whatever had happened the night before Eddie Wainwright was fresh as a daisy at 8am in the Commons the following morning. His colleagues chuckled that he was never ever the worse for wear either in his constituency or in the presence of his beloved wife of 60 years, Dorothy, who was a tower of strength both to him and to the Labour Party.

— Tom Dwyer

LAW REPORT: 3 FEBRUARY 1998

Society can set off campaigning costs for VAT

The costs of campaigning incurred by a society promoting field sports on behalf of subscribing members were incurred in the course of its business for the purposes of value added tax.

Commissioners of Customs and Excise v British Field Sports Society, Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Beldam, Lord Justice Hutchison and Lord Justice Mummery) 30 January 1998

The Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal of the Commissioners of Customs and Excise against the decision of Mr Justice Hidden, upholding the decision of the Value Added Tax Tribunal in favour of the British Field Sports Society on its appeal against value added tax assessments.

David Milne QC and Aparna Nathan (Kings, Tisbury Wells) for the British Field Sports Society; *Nigel*

Plumley QC and Robert Jay (Solicitors, HM Customs and Excise) for the Commissioners.

Lord Justice Beldam said that the society had been formed with a view to protecting the rights of its members to carry on field sports. In order to counteract the recent increase in attacks upon the right to carry on field sports, the society had decided to make a substantial increase in its use of outside consultants in public relations, research, campaigning, printing and in supplying the media with information.

Until 1990 the society had been treated as outside the scope of VAT, not being a business as defined in section 47 of the Value Added Tax Act 1983. In 1990 the society had begun to offer members substantial legal liability insurance and a free legal help line,

as well as other insurance cover, free copies of its newspaper and a free country sports directory.

From 1990 onwards the society had been required to account for VAT on its subscription income at the standard rate; that proportion of the subscription attributable to insurance was allowed as an exempt supply, and the part attributable to the provision of literature as a zero-rated supply.

In April 1993, however, the Commissioners had sought to deny the society the right to set off input tax by ruling that the tax it incurred in providing its members with professional services in public relations, printing, publishing, lobbying and its other campaigning activities was not attributable to the facilities or advantages available to its members and was not, thus, incurred in the course of a business within section

47(2)(a) of the Act. It was still required to account for VAT on subscriptions as it was providing facilities and advantages to its members, and was thus deemed to be carrying on a business within the meaning of section 47(2)(a) of the Act. That was the ruling which had given rise to the society's appeal to the Tribunal.

The Commissioners argued that acting as a collective voice, campaigning on behalf of members, even furthering the interests of members by such campaigning could not, without more, be the provision of a facility or advantage to those members. The society contended that its campaigning services provided clearly identifiable benefits to members who could not, individually, provide them effectively. It argued further that output tax and input tax must be treated consistently, and that the Com-

missioners were seeking to treat them inconsistently.

The scope of the phrase "facilities or advantages" in section 47 of the Act was very wide and it was therefore permissible to resort to the meanings which would ordinarily be given to the words. "Facilities" referred to the means, resources or conveniences which made it easier to achieve a purpose, and "advantages" meant the benefit or gain, usually of something not previously enjoyed or available. On that basis the conclusion of the Tribunal was entirely justifiable. The society, in return for the subscription, provided members with the facility or advantage of putting forward a collective view in a professional way, using the means which in modern conditions were essential if public opinion was to be effectively influenced.

— Kate O'Hanlon, Barrister

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned on 071-293 2002 (24-hour answering machine 071-293 2011) or faxed on 071-293 2010, and are charged at £4.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER GAZETTE announcements (notices, functions, forthcoming marriages, marriages) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line (VAT extra). They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

The OBITUARIES e-mail address is obituaries@independent.co.uk

The Independent's main switchboard number is 071-293 2000.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Princess Royal, member of the International Olympic Committee and President of the British Olympic Association, attends the 107th International Olympic Committee meeting followed by the XVIII Olympic Winter Games in Nagano, Japan. The Duke of Kent, President, Edeco Foundation, attends the Student of the Year ceremony at Drapers' Hall, Thompson's Row, London EC2, and at Patron, Trinity College of Music, attends a concert celebrating the 50th birthday of the Principal, Mr Gavin Henderson, at St John's Smith Square, London SW1.

Changing of the Guard
The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

Birthdays

1946: Boris Karloff (William Henry Pratt), actor, 1909. On this day Greece was declared to be independent under the protection of France, Russia and Britain, 1830, in New Zealand, the cities of Napier and Hastings were almost destroyed in an earthquake when 256 people were killed, 1931: Berlin was bombed in daylight by the Allies using over 1,000 aircraft, 1945: Harold Macmillan, as Prime Minister, made his "Wind of Change" speech in Cape Town, 1960: the Soviet spacecraft *Luna 9* reached the Moon, sending back television pictures, 1966: Today is the Feast Day of St Anskar, St Blaize, St Ia the Virgin, St Laurence of Canterbury, St Laurence of Spoleto, St Margaret of England and St Werburga.

Lectures

Victoria and Albert Museum: Simone Matthews, "Interior Design and Furniture in London's Palaces and Town Houses", 2.30pm. **British Museum:** Ralph Jackson, "The New Stannoy Find and Medicine in Roman Britain", 1.15pm. **National Portrait Gallery:** Angela Cox, "Samuel Pepys and Lord Sandwich", 1.10pm. **Gresham College** (Barnard's Inn Hall, London EC1): Professor Susan Greenfield, "Windows on the Mind: the scientist sees in", 1pm. **Prof. Simon Lee, "New Labour, New Constitution: new judges", 5.30pm. Sheldonian Theatre, Oxford (Oxford Amnesty Lectures): Dr Ian Wilmut, "Dolly: the age of biological control", 6pm.**

Anniversaries

Births: Johann Georg Albrechtsberger, composer, 1736; Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman medical practitioner, 1821; Walter Bagehot, economist, author and journalist, 1826; Gertrude Stein, author and critic, 1874; Pritvik Raimier, composer, 1903; Deaths: Richard "Beaky" Nash, gambler and dandy, 1762; George Crabbe, poet, 1832; Edward Charles Pickering, astronomer, 1919; John Lane, publisher, 1925; Edward Phillips Oppenheim, thriller-writer,

Footsie joins global share surge to hit fresh heights

A surge in share prices rippled across the time zones from Hong Kong to New York yesterday. The reason was a heady combination of merger mania, optimism about interest rates and the first ray of hope on Asia's economic prospects. Dione Coyle in London and Stephen Vines in Hong Kong followed the action.

Share prices leapt around the globe, thanks to the news of the huge pharmaceutical merger between Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham and confidence in the financial markets that US, German and UK interest rates are unlikely to rise this week.

In London the FTSE-100 index ended 141 points higher at a record of 5,599, equivalent to a £24bn increase in the value of shares. It was the fourth new high on the trot, although tantalisingly below the 5,600 barrier it had breached earlier in the day.

Shares in drugs companies, along with Hong Kong-related stocks such as HSBC and Standard Chartered, made the biggest leaps. Analysts reckoned

the pharmaceutical industry would now see further bids and mergers.

"What we have is merger mania," said Trevor Greatham, a strategist at Merrill Lynch. The Paris and Frankfurt bourses also beat their previous records yesterday.

Soon after trading started on Wall Street the Dow Jones index soared back past the 8,000 level, while the broader Standard & Poor's 500 index climbed briefly above 1,000 for the first time. By late morning the Dow was 147 points up at 8,053.23.

Asian markets had earlier set the buoyant tone on the first trading day of the Chinese Year of the Tiger. Hong Kong led the pack, on the day known traditionally as "the red opening", with a spectacular 14 per cent gain in share prices.

It was the third highest percentage rise ever and the second highest points increase, taking the Hang Seng Index up 1,326 points to 10,578.6. Volumes traded were also far higher than in recent weeks.

After this start, it was easy for optimism about the economy and interest rates to take hold in the markets. Although the Federal Reserve, the Bank of England and the Bundesbank all held key meetings this week, none is expected to increase the cost of borrowing.

In the UK this optimism was boosted by a survey suggesting that growth in manufacturing fell back last month to its lowest since August. The survey, by the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply, showed that export orders and employment were down in January, although domestic orders kept output rising.

The activity index fell from 52.7 in December to 51.3 - expanding, but barely. "Industry needs a further tightening in monetary policy like a hole in the head," said Jonathan Lynnes, an economist at HSBC Markets.

Despite the economic slowdown, many analysts remain optimistic about prospects for corporate profits, and hence share prices, this year. Boh Semple at NatWest Markets said: "What the Glaxo deal is telling us is that the pressure will not be on profit margins so much as people finding themselves out on the street without a job."

Separately, the Halifax said house prices had risen 0.6 per cent in January, or 5.8 per cent year-on-year. Although last month's increase took them to the highest since the 1989 boom, the Halifax predicted "moderate" house price growth this year.

In the US, Alan Greenspan, the Fed chairman, signalled no move on rates there for the time being. Although the economy is

booming, there are only tentative signs of inflationary pressure.

Investors are now hoping that the momentum will continue, putting an end to the volatility in global stock markets.

Richard Wini, the managing director of the stockbrokers United Mok Ying Kie, said yesterday's rise was attributable to better regional prospects, particularly in Indonesia and Korea. However, Nikko Securities in Hong Kong warned that the current reporting season would produce some unpleasant news as a result of the high interest rates in the fourth quarter of last year. "We are not calling this a turning-point," said the broker.

A notable feature of yesterday's trading was the high-profile participation of overseas fund managers. This was particularly true in Singapore, where shares climbed more than 10 per cent. Bangkok was up 11 per cent and Jakarta showed almost a similar rise.

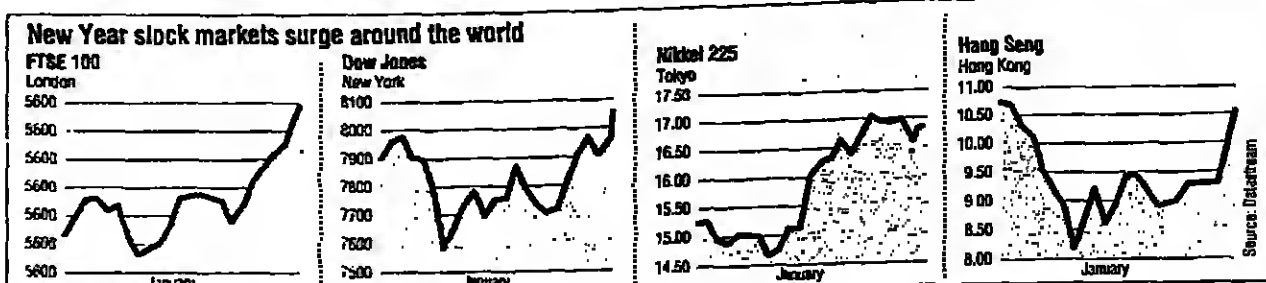
In Tokyo the Nikkei 225 made more modest progress, ending 148 points higher at 16,776.82.

The Korean stock market, however, was down almost 5 per cent yesterday. But the fall was due to profit-taking in the wake of the impressive 56 per cent rise in stock prices since the beginning of 1998.

Outlook, page 25



A panel displays the closing of the Hang Seng Index outside a bank in Hong Kong yesterday. The index rocketed to its second biggest point gain, drawing strength from rallying markets in the region. Photograph: Reuters



Drug shares soar as takeover fever grips sector

Shares in pharmaceutical companies soared yesterday as the stock market responded to the planned mega-merger between Glaxo and SmithKline Beecham. The entire drugs sector was gripped by takeover fever as traders speculated on who else might feel the urge to merge.

But while analysts applauded the deal some fund managers are not so sure. Nigel Cope and Andrew Yates report.

Glaxo was the major beneficiary of the market's new "drugs high" with its shares rocketing by 20.7 per cent to 1983p. The surge added £12bn to the company's market value while SmithKline's shares rose by more than 8 per cent, increasing its value by £3.6bn. At these levels a combined Glaxo-SmithKline would be worth £117bn.

Shares in Zeneca were dragged higher in the frenzy, rising by almost 10 per cent as analysts suggested it may now be prompted to seek a deal. "Zeneca will be touted as a bid candidate though the management are likely to be against it," said Valerie Lee at Panmure Gordon. "And we would expect to see consolidation in the US market."

Analysts suggest the most likely groups to seek a deal are Merck of the US and American Home Products, which was in talks with SmithKline itself until Friday night when it was abandoned by SmithKline in favour of a Glaxo deal.

But while analysts praised the proposed merger, some institutional shareholders were more critical. One senior fund manager said: "I can't help but think that the whole thing is somewhat overcooked. Is it really conceivable that Sir Richard Sykes [Glaxo's chairman] and Jan Leschly [SmithKline's chief executive] will work so well together? It looks like a blueprint for tension at some stage."

The fund manager also questioned the scope for potential cost-cutting, given that Glaxo has only recently completed major cuts following its merger with Wellcome in 1995. "Are these companies really so inefficient that they will be able to make £1bn-plus savings?"

Another institutional investor questioned the potential windfalls for the group's management, depending on how the deal is structured. If a "newco" is formed to take over both companies it could trigger share option payments on both sides. These would run into millions of pounds.

If the merger goes ahead there are likely to be huge pay increases for the Glaxo executives, who earn significantly less than their counterparts at SmithKline, which has a reputation for lavish payments. Sir Richard Sykes was paid a total of £1.1m in 1996, compared with Jan Leschly's £2.1m. As Sir Richard will be executive chairman of the new group and Mr Leschly its chief executive, the Glaxo man is likely to expect equal pay. He will need at least to double his salary to take him ahead of SmithKline's Dr Jean Pierre-Garnier, who will be one of the merged group's executive directors. He earned £1.96m last year.

Outlook, page 25

Government to put £123m into Airbus despite Treasury opposition

The Department of Trade and Industry yesterday scored a major victory against the Treasury after the Government unveiled plans to invest £123m in a new generation of Airbus Industrie aircraft in a move that could guarantee 27,000 UK jobs.

The move, which was strongly opposed by Treasury officials on the grounds the project could be self-financed, was

seen by some as a government attempt to send the right political signals to Europe.

Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, said the cash to Airbus, which is 20 per cent owned by British Aerospace, was given as part of a new relationship with industry. The money would secure more than 2,000 jobs at BAe and underpin the security of A

further 25,000 jobs at its suppliers, she said.

Mrs Beckett explained: "The agreement with BAe continues the Government's drive to create a new partnership between government and industry. The investment by the Government is repayable and will be on a commercial basis."

The money, which follows a £200m aid package to Rolls-

Royce to develop Trent engines for the project, will be used as launch aid in the development of two new aircraft, the long-range A340-500 and the 380 seater A340-600. These would compete with the US built Boeing 777 and the smaller versions of the 747.

Sir Richard Evans, BAe chief executive, said the cash injection was "excellent news for Britain, for Airbus and for the 25,000 or so workers across the UK who are involved with this great European project."

He added: "The government is investing in success, given that the A340-500/600 has attracted 100 commitments worth \$13bn from major airlines including Virgin, Air Canada and Egypt Air."

These comments reinforced the views of the Treasury and

others that the project would have proceeded regardless of public funding. Arabella Grant, aerospace analyst with stockbroker Panmure Gordon, said: "Airbus would have gone ahead with this anyway. But the Government should neither win nor lose because it's a guaranteed long-term investment."

— Terry Macolister

Outlook, page 25

Gravy train rolls on as two bosses share £1.2m pay-off

Further evidence emerged yesterday that the City gravy train is still steaming ahead after two top executives received pay-offs totalling £1.2m.

John Garrett, head of Rank's leisure division, is in line for a £500,000 pay-off after resigning yesterday following a boardroom bust-up with Andrew Teare, the group's chief executive. Finn Johnson, former head of United Distillers, the spirits business of Guinness, has become the latest casualty of the drinks group's mega-merger with Grand Metropolitan. He will receive £800,000.

Rank admitted yesterday that Mr Garrett had left the group following a disagreement with Andrew Teare. Mr Garrett said: "It was a question of strategy. I did not believe in some of the things that Rank was doing and the direction the company was moving."

"As a shareholder I am concerned about Rank's performance and dissatisfied with the share price," he added.

Mr Garrett declined to comment further about his disagreements with the board. However, City observers believe that he became increasingly concerned that Mr Teare's investment strategy was misguided and plans to revitalise

the Butlin's brand were doomed to fail. Before Andrew Teare's appointment two years ago, Mr Garrett had been seen as front-runner to replace Michael Gifford, the group's former chief executive.

Sir Denis Henderson, chairman of Rank, said he had backed Andrew Teare in the boardroom battle. "The idea that this was a boardroom coup is a load of codswallop. As far as I know no other senior management are about to leave."

Sir Denis claimed that Mr Garrett was against Rank's plans to sale and lease back some of its property and rejected strict targets for a 15 per cent return on new investment. Rank also claims that Mr Garrett was unhappy with the amount of investment made available to

the leisure business, a fact that Mr Garrett strenuously denies.

Mr Garrett is considering launching a management buy out for the leisure division which includes the Mecca bingo chain, Odeon cinemas, Grosvenor casinos, the 70m Cobbleigh pub estate and 51 night clubs.

Mr Johnson, who joined Guinness in 1994 from Euro, the Scandinavian building products group, was known for his dynamism and boundless enthusiasm for the job. But Mr Keenan is understood to have been given his new role due to his skills in handling mergers which he proved when integrating Kraft and General Foods.

Rank's shares rose 12.25p to 312p and Diageo's fell 2p to 552p. — Andrew Yates

Investment column, page 24



Finn Johnson: Merger casualty to get £800,000



John Garrett: In line for a £500,000 pay-off

Barclays takes £688m hit from BZW sell-off

Barclays yesterday revealed it would suffer a £688m hit following last year's decision to sell parts of BZW, its investment banking arm.

Following City pressure to spell out the financial implications of the deal, the bank said its 1997 figures, due for release on 17 February, would include a £340m restructuring charge and a £129m goodwill charge. To the City's surprise, Barclays also revealed the businesses made an operating loss of £219m last year. This was primarily due to "uncertainty surrounding their future and

difficult market conditions", the bank said yesterday.

Martin Taylor, Barclays' chief executive, said: "We made a strategic decision to redefine our investment banking business in the autumn, because continuing to invest in parts of the business

no longer made commercial sense for us."

Last November, the bank announced it was selling its UK and European equities and corporate advisory businesses to Credit Suisse First Boston (CSFB), the Swiss-American investment bank.

This year's announcement that CSFB was to buy some of Barclays' Asian equities businesses marked the end of the sale process. The bank's remaining Asian equities businesses are to be closed, with the possible exception of the Philippines, where Barclays

still hopes to negotiate a sale. Kathryn Newton, banking analyst at UBS, said: "The charges going through the profit and loss account [the £340m restructuring charge and the £129m goodwill charge] were slightly more than expected, but did not come as an enormous surprise. But the terrible trading loss [the operating loss of £219m] was a big surprise."

The City was pleased Mr Taylor had moved to end uncertainty over the cost of the BZW sale, and Barclays' shares closed up 41p at 188p.

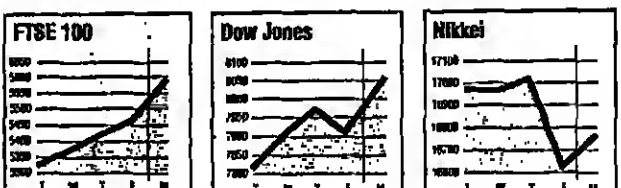
— Lea Paterson

SVB said its policy, which was inspired by the antics of Mr Leeson, "provides cover for a loss sustained by a bank as a result of trading which has been concealed by the trader or falsely recorded in the institution's records. The cover extends to commitments in excess of permitted limits, trading in unauthorised instruments and trading with unapproved counterparties". But although SVB insures against dishonesty, it does not cover incompetence.

Mr Villers said yesterday he expected further sales of the policy this month: "The new product has been targeted at quality institutions with a sound internal control environment."

— Lea Paterson

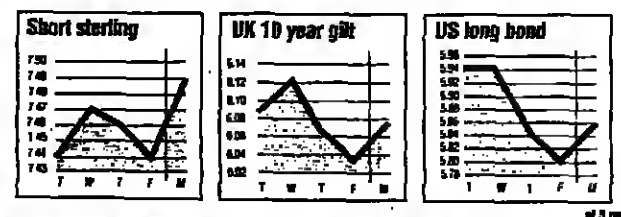
STOCK MARKETS



FTSE 100

Index	Close	Change	Change(%)	52 wk High	52 wk Low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	5599.00	140.50	2.57	5458.50	4199.10	3.22
FTSE 250	4878.40	16.90	0.35	4963.80	4384.20	3.26
FTSE 350	2656.40	58.50	2.17	2802.90	2075.70	3.23
FTSE All Share	2588.06	52.38	2.07	2536.88	2056.07	3.22
FTSE SmallCap	2384.70	12.00	0.51	2407.40	2182.10	3.06
FTSE RealProd	1298.50	5.90	0.46	1346.50	1225.20	3.12
FTSE AIM	975.10	1.50	0.15	1138.00	865.90	1.24
Dow Jones	8055.97	148.97	1.86	8290.33	6356.78	1.71
Nikkei	16776.82	148.35	0.88	20910.79	14498.21	0.92
Hang Seng	10578.60	1326.24	14.33	16820.31	7929.13	3.78
Dax	4822.81	82.43	1.76	4458.89	3032.34	1.77

INTEREST RATES



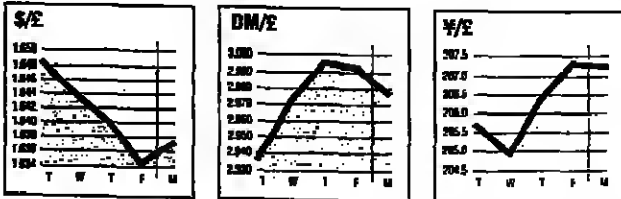
Money Market Rates

Index	2 month	3 month	1 year	1 yr 10 year	10 year	1 yr 10 year	Long bond	1 yr 10 year
UK	7.56	7.22	7.48	0.67	6.07	-1.33	6.05	-1.55
US	5.63	0.76	5.66	0.29	5.55	0.66	5.65	-0.68
Japan	0.81	0.31	0.79	0.22	2.03	-0.55	2.65	-0.59
Germany	3.53	0.38	3.76	0.56	5.07	-0.67	5.68	-0.92

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Prices	Price (p)	Chg (p)	% Chg	Prices	Price (p)	Chg (p)	% Chg
Glaxo Wellcome	1983.00	340.00	20.69	Brit Sky Broad	342.00	-19.50	-5.39
Zeneca	2685.00	235.00	8.95	Wetherdown	277.50	-15.00	-5.13
SmithKline Beech	845.00	65.00	8.38	Brit Energy	465.50	-24.00	-4.90
Royal Ind Scot	931.00	61.00	7.01	Premier Oil	46.50	-2.00	-4.12

CURRENCIES



Pound

Index	at 1pm	Change	% Chg	Dollar	at 1pm	Change	% Chg
Dollar	1.6375	+0.0200	1.25	Sterling	0.6107	-0.190	0.6202
D-Mark	2.9748	-1.5200	2.6558	D-Mark	1.8178	-1.3800	1.6421
Yen	207.19	-10.17	197.25	Yen	126.55	-10.49	121.74
2 index	105.00	0.00	95.40	S index	109.60	+0.60	102.00

OTHER INDICATORS

at 1pm	Close	Chg	% Chg	Index	Chg	% Chg	Next Day
Brit Oil (\$)	15.25	-0.32	2.28	GDP	113.90	3.10	110.48
Gold (\$)	302.65	1.40	346.45	RPI	160.00	3.80	154.44
Silver (\$)	6.25	0.20	4.96	Base Rates	7.25	6.00	

www.bloomberg.com/uk

source: Bloomberg

THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

EDITED BY ANDREW YATES

Barclays spells out the damage

Normally when a chief executive tells the market that, because of a strategic error, profits are going to be £688m lower than normal, all hell breaks loose. Unless, of course, you are Barclays. Then the City pats you on the back and your shares rise by 41p to 1886p.

In fact Barclays' shares have outperformed the extremely buoyant banking sector of late, despite prolonged sheoanigans over the future of its investment banking arm, BZW. After months of rumour and counter-rumour, it offloaded BZW's equity and corporate advisory activities at the end of last year. It admitted the businesses had been sold at less than book value, but failed to spell out the full financial implications.

Barclays finally came clean yesterday and admitted it will take a £340m restructuring charge and £129m goodwill charge in 1997. Oh, and by the way, the equities business made an operating loss of £219m, taking the total hit to £688m.

In the normal course of things, all this would add up to a rough ride for Barclays' shareholders. Yet the stock has been doing well of late, and there are good reasons why.

First, the City is over the moon to see the back of Barclays' global investment banking ambitions, whatever the price. The qualities that make a good retail banker do not make a good investment banker, a fact that Barclays – and for that matter NatWest – have been slow to digest.

Second, the stock has been buoyed up by persistent merger rumours. Martin Taylor, Barclays' chief executive, has indicated his company would be more than willing to jump on the consolidation bandwagon. The marriage partner could be NatWest, Legal & General or a former building society, depending on which rumour you believe. But, whatever form they take, the rumours can only be good for shares.

Finally, Barclays, NatWest and Lloyds have a lower exposure to Asia than HSBC and Standard Chartered. This fact has tended to benefit the former at the expense of the latter, a trend that looks set to continue as long as Asia's economic future remains in the balance.

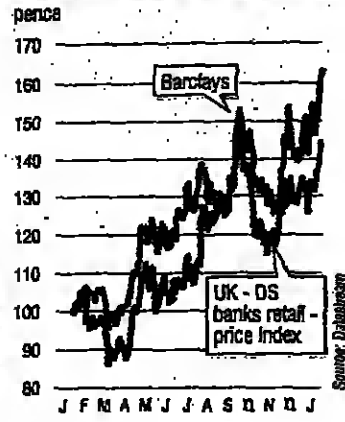
All the large banks report annual profits in the next few weeks, and es-

Barclays: At a glance

Market value: £28.66bn, share price 1886p (+41p)

Five-year record	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Operating income (£m)	7401	6930	7251	7598	8126
Pre-tax profits (£m)	1920	7240	8360	10420	11772
Earnings per share (p)	19.20	72.40	83.60	104.20	117.72
Dividends per share (p)	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50
1997 estimates from Nikko Europe					
Key 1997 estimates					
	profit £m	P/E ratio			
Barclays	2553	16.0			
Lloyds TSB	3172	21.0			
NatWest	1165	23.9			
HSBC	5098	13.0			
Standard Chartered	827	11.9			

Barclays relative to bank sector



timates from Nikko Europe make Barclays, along with NatWest and Lloyds, look rather pricey. But the premium is justified by industry rationalisation and the magnitude of the banks' exposure to Asia. Worth hanging on to for now.

Rank reassures the market

Rank's shareholders breathed a sigh of relief yesterday. With chief executive Andrew Teare's recovery plan centred on the expansion of the Hard Rock Cafe chain, so much is hanging on the success or failure of the business.

A profits warning from Planet Hollywood earlier this month set alarm bells ringing. But Rank reassured the market that it had managed to avoid its main rival's problems and that profits had not fallen off a cliff. After a truly dreadful run which has seen the stock hit its lowest level since 1993 over

the last few weeks, Rank's share price perked up 12.25p to 312p.

So does this mark the turning point for Rank? The simple answer is that it is too early to tell. Mr Teare's huge investment programme should not begin to bear fruit for probably the next six months at least. Until then several question marks remain over the group's strategy. Analysts believe Hard Rock's profits are still only growing at a pedestrian rate and Rank will need to do a lot better than that to convince a growing band of sceptics in the City.

The expensive revamp of Buitin's and the delayed roll-out of the Tom Coleigh chain are also concerns. Meanwhile the Odeon cinema chain and Mecca bingo division are doing better than some rivals in the industry, but there is still plenty of work to do to get the businesses up to scratch.

It not just the market that has raised questions about Mr Teare's reforms. John Garrett, head of the group's leisure business, has been increasingly vocal in his complaints and yesterday decided to quit.

Mr Teare should be given the benefit of the doubt for now but if any of his reforms backfire he could be the next board director to lose his job. BZW forecasts 1997 profits of £295m, rising to £325m this year, putting the shares on a prospective p/e ratio of 13, then 11. Hold on.

No tea party for Whittard

Whittard of Chelsea has not proved to be investors' cup of tea over the last few months, with the shares falling by more than 10 per cent.

Yesterday's interim results from the specialist coffee, tea and ceramics merchant, highlighted the market's concerns. Sales rose by more than a fifth in the six months to November thanks to new store openings, but economic problems in Japan and the devaluation of the yen have hit margins at its 34 outlets over there. Underlying pre-tax profits rose 16 per cent to £639,000 for the six months to November.

Whittard has continued to open new shops at a rapid rate. However, the group relies heavily on new openings to maintain its profits momentum. Another 12-15 UK outlets are planned this year but it is difficult to see where international growth is coming from. Expansion plans in the Far East have been affected by the financial turmoil that has afflicted the area. Perhaps wisely it has not yet decided to challenge the continental Europeans or the Americans on their own ground, and it has only just begun to dip its toe into South America and South Africa.

Whittard has been singularly unsuccessful in its attempts to diversify away from its retail business. Nothing much has so far come of plans to market specialist coffees through supermarkets. A misperceived attempt to sell casual clothes has cost the group £66,000.

Whittard was an Aim high flyer. But the group has found it tougher going on the main market and the decision by the chairman and chief executive to sell some stock recently has hardly helped sentiment. The shares did edge up 3.5p to 200p yesterday. However analysts have scaled back profit forecasts for the full year from £3.3m to £3m, and 1998-99 forecasts from £4.3m to £4m, putting the shares of 16, then 13. High enough.

CU eyes up £191m purchase of top German life insurer

Commercial Union yesterday announced considering spending £191m on one of Germany's leading life insurers in an effort to expand its reach in Europe. As Andrew Verity reports, the expansion follows a surprising success story in Poland.

The insurance giant said it wanted to buy Berlinische Lebensversicherung AG from Europe's largest life insurer, Allianz, and Munich Re, the German reinsurer, who between them hold a 95 per cent stake. The talks are part of the company's drive to establish a presence in European countries which are expected to encourage private insurance and move away from state provision.

Peter Foster, CU's finance

director, said: "In Germany, the life insurance premiums are still a smaller market than the UK. Pensions are unfunded and at the moment most of it is still done through the state. This is part of a strategy to develop the life insurance business in Europe."

CU said it was convinced the German market for life insurance would grow sharply. Demographic problems would push the government into farming out pensions to the private sector.

In contrast to the UK market, Germany spends just 2.5 per cent of GDP on life insurance. In the UK, life insurance makes up 7 per cent of GDP.

Shares in Commercial Union eased 11p to 979p yesterday. Mr Foster said this reflected the rest of the insurance sector rather than reaction to its acquisition. "The reaction we have had from analysts is that it fits with strategy and that there is a good opportunity there," he said.

CU has already had a sur-

prising run of success in Poland, where it already has 45 per cent of the market for selling life insurance to individuals.

Setting up its operation in 1993, CU has invested just £5m on the operation. CU Polska now brings in £57m a year in annual premiums. Lump sum investments leapt by 82 per cent last year to £8m.

The company also has established operations in France, where it is aiming to sell UK-style individual pensions to French investors. A Czech operation was also set up in November last year.

CU, which employs more than 9,000 staff, takes more than £3.7bn in insurance premiums every year, including general insurance, such as household and motor cover.

Berlinische, which has 800 staff, had premium income last year of £277m and has recently remodelled its management and changing its operations.

La Senza in takeover talks

La Senza, the troubled lingerie retailer that has issued a series of profits warnings in the last year, confirmed yesterday it was talks with "a number of parties" that could lead to an offer for the company. Ann Summers, the retailer of raunchy underwear and sex aids, is thought to be one of the companies involved.

Shares in La Senza, priced at 150p when the group came to the market in 1996, closed 8.5p higher at 25.5p. However, some analysts suggested an offer might have to be pitched at up to 40p to be successful.

La Senza has been a disastrous performer since coming to the market in May 1996. Its rapid store opening programme proved unattainable due to rising rents and competition for sites and its trading has been below expectations.

Nigel Cope

Nomura linked with Gibbs Mew

Nomura, the Japanese investment bank that has bought into the British transport, betting and pub industries and wants to buy Energy Group, yesterday emerged as a possible predator for Gibbs Mew.

Shares in the Salisbury-based pub operator soared 52p to 308.5p yesterday after it admitted it was in takeover talks. Ushers, the brewer and pub operator that recently took over a contract to brew Gibbs Mew's famous Bishop's Tipple ale, is another likely suitor, as is Enterprise

Inns, the acquisitive pub group. Some larger pub chains such as Greene King are understood to have ruled themselves out.

Analysts believe the group could fetch around £45m, although a bidding war could push that figure much higher.

Nomura became the largest pub landlord in the UK with the purchase of the Intreprenuer chain and is looking for more acquisitions in the sector. It owns William Hill bookmakers, Angel Trains and 57,000 army homes.

— Andrew Yates

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
AAA (H)	1,20m (1,00m)	415.0m (387.0m)	21.2p (20.0p)	
Rank (P)	62.40m (56.60m)	4.33m (4.47m)	28.1p (28.0p)	0.5p (0.3p)
Water Rank (P)	95.56m (75.50m)	11.30m (9.23m)	12.8p (11.30p)	1.75p (1.50p)
Highland Timber (P)	0.28m (0.28m)	-0.11m (0.53m)	-2.57p (1.98p)	
Scottish Business (P)	92.30m (82.73m)	0.965m (0.585m)	2.52p (1.50p)	0.65p (0.35p)
Wilder Education (P)	18.87m (14.23m)	2.75m (1.25m)	8.3p (6.80p)	1.25p (1.00p)
Whittard of Chelsea (P)	14.1m (11.8m)	0.405m (0.550m)	5.4p (2.2p)	7.5p (1.0p)

(P) = Profit (H) = Interest

Fewer than 20 employees? Have your say on a law that could affect your business and help disabled people.

The Disability Discrimination Act protects disabled people against discrimination. The employment part of the Act currently affects companies with 20 or more staff, but the Government is consulting on whether this limit should be lowered to cover smaller organisations like your own. To have your say, get hold of a consultation document by calling 0345 622 633, textphone 0345 622 644 quoting SEF1, or fill in this coupon and send it to DDA Information Line, FREEPOST MID 02164 Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 9BR.

Name _____ Address _____
Telephone _____ Postcode _____
D/EE
Disability - on the agenda
SEF1 Department for
Social Security and Employment

So why should you go to university or college?

Find out in..

UCAS
THE UNIVERSITY COUNCILS
AND ASSOCIATIONS
SCHOOL

Alcohol
CAN YOU HANDLE IT?
TAKE OUR TEST

Fees!
THE LATEST
ON WHAT YOU
WILL HAVE
TO PAY

Frees!
5,000 CDs IN OUR
MONSTER VIRGIN
GIVEAWAY

PLUS!
Interviews
HOW TO COME AWAY WITH
THE PLACE YOU WANT

Win!
WIN A CITY
COUNCIL

On the
Ball
2005 COLLEGE
DAYS

MORE DASH
LESS DOSH
looking cool on a budget

SO WHY SHOULD YOU GO TO UNIVERSITY OR COLLEGE?

From The Independent and UCAS
Available from WHSmith priced £2.20

UCAS
THE INDEPENDENT
INDEPENDENT
ON SUNDAY



OUTLOOK ON THE GLAXO-SMITHKLINE MERGER, INTEREST RATE PROSPECTS AND AIRBUS LAUNCH AID

Why Super Drug is good for everyone's health

Perish the thought that the Glaxo-SmithKline merger could be motivated by something as base as share option bonuses rather than boring old economies of scale. The first rumblings can already be heard from Greenburyally-correct institutions. Judging, however, by the shot in the arm the proposed creation of Super Drug gave the market yesterday there is more than enough in this deal to keep shareholders happy even if the SmithKline board fills its boots.

That said, giant drugs companies which put even the likes of Coca-Cola in the shade make consumers and regulators twitchy. So it is too early to view this as a done deal, even though Sir Richard Sykes and Jan Leachley have agreed who gets the key to the executive washroom (they both do) and what the respective shareholder split will be.

The reasons behind the merger are the familiar ones of scale and consolidation. In an industry where size matters, Glaxo-SmithKline will be the mother of all businesses. It will have a valuation of more than £100bn, sales of £16bn and an annual research and development budget approaching £2bn.

Supposing the merger is classed as a "control event" then the corporate gravy train will start rolling with spectacular results for executives from both companies.

But the scope for economies of scale it will offer promises to be even more impressive. Glaxo-SmithKline ought to be able to shave £1bn off its cost base without blinking. This will cause some shrinkage in the 106,000-strong workforce but it will be nothing compared to the pain Glaxo-SmithK-

line could inflict on the opposition. Sir Richard's strategy of developing three new drugs a year by the millennium against the current industry average of one per company, will cease to look like the product of a mind-enhancing substance.

And yet such is the fragmented nature of the pharmaceutical industry that Glaxo-SmithKline will still account for only 8 per cent of the world market for prescription drugs with Merck in second place on 4.6 per cent. True, it would dominate the market for anti-viral drugs, like the herpes treatment Zovirax, and anti-emetic drugs used to combat the side-effects of chemotherapy. True, also, its combined sales in some local markets would be a good deal higher than 8 per cent.

But the Glaxo-Wellcome merger three years ago provides an example of how competing products can be sold off to satisfy regulatory concerns.

Unless Margaret Blockit can find a pretext for claiming jurisdiction over the deal, the appropriate investigating authority on this side of the Atlantic will be Brussels where Karel Van Miert, the Competition Commissioner, is already on record as supporting consolidation in the pharmaceuticals sector.

Provided Glaxo-SmithKline can demonstrate that a merger would bring new drugs to the market more quickly and cost effectively, then the industrial rationale will be as compelling as the financial logic.

And, best of all, this will be British powerhouse in a sector where size will become increasingly critical to success. Unless Glaxo

and SmithKline tie the knot now and leapfrog to number one slot, how long before they are left further behind by Merck-Pfizer or Novartis-Roche?

Don't count on a rates standstill

The Bank of England's decision on whether or not to raise interest rates this week is finely balanced, according to almost every City pundit, but most are confident the balance is going to tip in favour of leaving them unchanged. Why? Because the economy has already started to slow, export growth has halted and manufacturers are gloomy. Besides, neither America's Federal Reserve Board tomorrow nor Germany's Bundesbank on Thursday is expected to increase borrowing costs.

The analysis is right to say it's a close call, but their confidence about which way the Bank will go reflects a selective reading of the mixed economic signals. While growth has been weaker than expected, inflation has been much higher, earnings growth is picking up and the service sector - more than two thirds of the economy - is still booming.

In truth, it will not make much difference what the Monetary Policy Committee decides on Thursday, for it is impossible to fine-tune the economy by quarter-point interest rate changes. The Bank's job is like steering a supertanker in thick fog.

In that case, why should it bother to raise rates again in the face of great uncertainty? For three reasons. First, as a matter of tactics, it might help bring the painfully high pound down if the markets were persuaded that rates had reached their peak.

Secondly, the Bank of England does not yet have the record or credibility of its counterparts in the US and Germany. If it fails to act and the next few weeks bring bad news on wages and prices, sentiment in the fickle financial markets would flip-flop. After all, inflation is higher here than in any other western industrial country apart from Greece.

Thirdly, the Bank has to live up to its own very optimistic inflation forecast. Its last Inflation Report in November was pretty confident that target inflation would be far lower than it is now. If in next week's quarterly Report the Bank's bosses want to show inflation getting back on track, they either need a rate rise now or they must use some other excuse, like the Asian crisis, to justify remaining so optimistic.

None of these are knock-out arguments. But they do suggest that it would be unwise to count on interest rate inaction on Thursday.

A new line on launch aid

Industrial launch aid is generally only given to projects that would otherwise not go ahead. Yesterday the Government

stood that convention on its head by handing over £123m to British Aerospace six weeks after the company had agreed to take part in the development of a new generation of long-range Airbus commercial jets.

The explanation for the time-lag is an unseemly squabble between the Treasury, which wanted to refuse BAe the money because it was already quite profitable enough, and the Department of Trade and Industry, which bought BAe's argument that the Airbus work along with 2,000 jobs would go abroad if its application was turned down.

The Prime Minister, no less, was called on to arbitrate and decided to come down on the side of jobs and a quiet life. Nor, given the pan-European nature of Airbus, did it do his wider ambitions any harm. Why fork out £1.2bn on a rail link to the Continent when you can establish your European credentials for a tenth of that?

The wings for the new Airbus A340-500 and 600 family of jets will now be built in Chester not Taiwan. All of which made it a good day for the North West yesterday on top of Merseyside's £43m subsidy from the taxpayer to build the baby Jag at Halewood.

But in succumbing to BAe's exaggerated threats to take jobs abroad the DTI has set an unfortunate precedent. The commercial prospects for the new Airbus alone ought to make the case for launch aid. Let's hope the taxpayer makes a real return of at least 8 per cent.

Staple launches panel to counter threat of corporate fraud

Business failures are currently running at an all-time low. But if, as expected, economic growth levels off there could be a swift increase in corporate fraud, business was warned yesterday. Roger Troph reports on a fresh attempt to combat a perennial problem.

The warning came from George Staple, former head of the Serious Fraud Office, at the official launch of a body designed to tackle the problem by drawing on expertise in a variety of sectors. The Fraud Advisory Panel has been established under the auspices of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, but is being supported by several public-sector organisations, including the Customs & Excise, the Department of Social Security, the National Audit Office and the City of London and Metropolitan police forces.

Ian McCartney, a minister in the Department of Trade and

Industry, welcomed the move, saying he hoped it would play an "important part in developing greater awareness of business fraud and the means of combating it".

The initiative was introduced by Gerry Acher, head of audit at accountants KPMG and chairman of the institute's audit faculty. He likened the move to the institute's prime role in setting up the Cadbury Committee on corporate governance in the wake of the spate of business failures that followed the late 1980s boom.

Many of these collapses, such as Polly Peck, Barlow Clowes and Bank of Credit and Commerce International, were followed by high-profile fraud trials. And Mr Staple and Mr Acher believe that experience suggests that if the current buoyant economic conditions are followed by another recession a similar pattern could follow - unless there is a change in the business culture.

The panel, which has already sat twice, has established three working parties charged with meeting the prime objective of achieving that change by reducing the incidence and impact

of business fraud. The first, to be chaired by Anthony Bingham, a partner at accountants Coopers & Lybrand and a member of the audit faculty, will gather information on fraud with the aim of creating a much more detailed picture of the problem. The second, headed by Mike Hoare, a former Metropolitan Police officer who is chairman of the Risk & Security management Forum, will investigate methods of prevention, provide advice in this area and make people more aware of the problem. The third, under Howard Page QC, will look at the effectiveness of existing methods of investigation and prosecution and seek to improve the speed of conviction.

This last area is of particular interest to Mr Staple who, since his return to the leading law firm Clifford Chance following his term at the SFO, has spoken of the need for a general offence of fraud if white-collar criminals are going to be caught and deterred. At present, prosecutors have to rely on alleged offences falling within the Theft Act, which can make trials extremely complex and convictions hard to secure.



George Staple: Addressing the need for a general offence of fraud for white-collar criminals

£43m aid brings Baby Jag to Halewood Pensions watchdog to prosecute lax firms

Britain's car industry received a double boost yesterday from government backing for a £400m Jaguar project and from a decision by Land Rover to invest £122m, creating 1,200 new jobs.

Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, announced a £43m tranche of public money to secure the commitment of Ford to build its Jaguar X400 at Halewood rather than overseas.

The investment will safeguard 2,900 existing jobs and hold out the prospect of a further 500 posts by the year 2002. More than 100,000 cars a year

are scheduled to roll off new assembly lines with 80 per cent earmarked for export.

Ford had threatened to build the "Baby Jag" with BMW series 3 and Mercedes C-class cars, in the US or Germany. Nick Scheele, Jaguar chairman and chief executive, said £43m covered the difference between building in the UK as opposed to abroad, where no subsidies would have been needed.

But Mr Scheele said there was no question that Halewood was less productive or efficient than plants in Germany. The extra costs covered

the amount of work needed to transform the Merseyside plant.

The decision to use Halewood is a big boost to a factory which for many years had a troubled history of labour problems and quality control. Scheele said its industrial relations record had improved dramatically. "The workforce has a lot of pride."

Tony Blair, speaking directly to employees at the plant via a satellite link from 10 Downing Street, said: "It demonstrates once again that international car companies recognise that Britain is a highly competitive place to build cars."

Meanwhile a huge recruitment drive is under way as part of the £122m programme to expand the network of Land Rover dealers across the country. The company owned by BMW of Germany, hopes to create 1,200 new jobs as it increases the number of outlets from 123 to 135.

Land Rover's network of independent dealers will put up the £122m, which will be spent on upgrading existing facilities as well as opening new ones. Land Rover sales are expected to double next year following the launch of the new Freelander model.

- Terry Macalister

port pension abuses, said a third of its inquiries had been about failure to pay. Further unreported offences are also likely to have occurred.

In many cases, employers were putting off paying contributions until more than three weeks after paying wages. In some cases, employers were failing to pay altogether. Opra is treating the initial court cases as a test. If they are successful, more criminal proceedings are expected.

Mr Hayes said the regulator had been soft with employers until now because of the difficulties they have had in meeting the tough requirements of the Pensions Act, which came into force last April.

"In future, the board of Opra will not be taking such a lenient course. Among the factors we will take into account when we consider a scheme's failure to comply will be the speed with which breaches are put right; the co-operation we receive; the track record of the pension scheme; and whether members' interests have been jeopardised."

The extent of failure to pay has shocked the pensions industry. The regulator, which can act only when whistleblowers re-

Westland and Boeing win £650m helicopter job

The Government has chosen a joint company of GKN's Westland Helicopters and the US planemaker Boeing to provide the training service for the British Army's WAH-64 Apache attack helicopter.

The contract is for 30 years, with an option to cancel at 20 years, and will generate some £650m at today's prices, GKN said. The company said the contract would be awarded under a government public/private partnership agreement, with GKN Westland and Boeing arranging the financing of the initial investment in equipment, infrastructure and personnel and the Ministry of Defence paying for training services.

Worry over bond PEPs

The trade body for unit trust and PEP providers yesterday warned of mounting concern that investors had unrealistic expectations of corporate bond PEPs. Philip Warland, director general of Autif, said he was worried that investors were buying corporate bonds from banks and building societies after seeing large - and highly unusual - returns over the last year.

"I'm worried people are buying these because they are offered by well-known institutions rather than because they understand them," he said. Mr Warland was speaking as Autif unveiled a survey of 1,000 people, a quarter of whom thought unit trusts were guaranteed to grow quicker than bank deposits.

GUS buys IT company

Great Universal Stores, the mail order group, added to its information services business yesterday when it agreed to pay £70m for SG2, a French information technology services company. GUS said the business will be integrated into Experian, its credit rating and database operation. SG2 was formed in 1970s by Société Générale, the French bank, to carry out its card and cheque processing. In addition it now operates call centres and marketing databases.

£300m update for BT

British Telecom is to undertake a £300m network modernisation programme to support the rapid growth in internet and data communications services. BT said these services would account for about 90 per cent of all corporate communications traffic by the year 2003. It said the money would be used to develop and expand its existing high-speed, high-capacity broadband multi-service network.

Roadchef head could make £90m if a sale goes ahead

The chief executive of Roadchef, the highway service station chain which has put itself up for sale, stands to make up to £90m if the deal goes through, it emerged yesterday. Tim Ingram Hill owns 21 per cent of Roadchef's shares.

A further 42 per cent is tied up in share options for senior management, the majority of which are thought to be in Mr Ingram Hill's hands. Sources said Mr Ingram Hill owned 60 per cent of the company, which is likely to be worth £150m.

Another 400 of the group's employees, who are members of its employee share ownership plan (Esop), would share a further £7.5m between them. Roadchef's employees control a further 5 per cent of the shares through the Esop, which was set up in 1987 and was the first such scheme to be established by a British company.

Roadchef yesterday announced that it was preparing to send details on the company to a wide range of interested buyers. The firm's interest in a

trade sale is believed to have been raised by the high price that Granada received for Wellcome Break, the service station chain it sold following its takeover of Forte. Investcorp, the Bahrain-based investment group, last year shocked the City with its winning £476m bid for Wellcome Break.

If it sells for similar valuations as Wellcome Break, Roadchef could fetch a price of £150m. In 1996, the last year for which figures are available, the company made an operating

profit of £6.88m on turnover of £113m.

Roadchef is likely to attract interest from a string of buyers. Asda, the supermarkets chain, and transport group National Express each submitted bids for Wellcome Break, as did a string of venture capital groups.

Investcorp is also expected to show an interest, and industry sources do not rule out Granada as a potential bidder. Both these firms would face competition hurdles.

- Peter Thal Larsen

This notice is issued in compliance with the requirements of the London Stock Exchange and appears as a matter of record only. It does not constitute an offer or an invitation to subscribe for or purchase any securities of Murray VCT 3 PLC.

MURRAY VCT 3 PLC

(Incorporated in England and Wales under the Companies Act 1985 with registered number 3495287)

Offer for Subscription of up to 40,000,000 Ordinary Shares of 10p each at an issue price of 100p per share payable in full on application sponsored by Merrill Lynch International

Application has been made for the Ordinary Shares to be admitted to the Official List. It is expected that admission will become effective, and that dealings in the Ordinary Shares on the London Stock Exchange will begin on 8 April 1998.

A prospectus relating to Murray VCT 3 PLC and containing an application form has been published. Copies may be obtained during normal business hours (Saturdays and public holidays excepted) from the date of this notice up to and including 4 February 1998 by collection only from the Company Announcements Office, London Stock Exchange, Old Broad Street, London, EC2N 1HP and until 2 April 1998 from:

Merrill Lynch International
20 Farringdon Road, London EC1M 3NH

Murray Johnstone Limited
7 West Nile Street, Glasgow G1 2PX

Murray Johnstone Limited
30 Coleman Street, London EC2R 5AN

3 February 1998

- Andrew Verity

Footsie soars to a new peak in drug-induced delirium

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

The £117bn drugs merger sent Footsie soaring to another peak with the stock market indulging in its favourite pastime - trying to spot the next deal.

The index surged 140.5 points to 5,599 with Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham providing a massive injection. Glaxo rose an incredible 20.7 per cent with a 340p gain to 1,983p (after 2,100p), and SB put on 65p to 845p (950p).

Ten minutes after the market opened Footsie was riding above 5,600, up 157, largely on the delirium evident in the shares of the new drug alliance.

As Glaxo and SB lost a little of their euphoria the market's hunt for other mega-merger candidates lifted Footsie constituents.

Not surprisingly Zeneca emerged as the favourite bid target. The drugs group, often linked with Swiss giant Roche as well as Glaxo in recent years, jumped 235p to 2,685p. At one time it was 355p higher.

Nycomed, the result of last year's merger between Amer-sham International and Norwegian group Nycomed, rose 100p to 2,500p.

Footsie's gain was the best since September last year when the story appeared that the Government was becoming more favourably disposed towards Britain's EMU involvement.

Trading in Glaxo and SB, which together will enjoy the market's largest capitalisation, and the perceived bid candidates was heavy.

But the drug-induced euphoria failed to spread through the rest of the market where volume was often modest. The Midcap index, representing the 250 shares immediately outside Footsie, managed a 16.9 gain to 4,878.4: it is 65 points below its peak, hit in October. The

Smallcap did manage a new high, gaining 12 to 2,384.7.

The latest Footsie burst only tended to reinforce the yawning gap which has developed between blue chips and the rest of the market.

With financials high on the takeover scale, blue chip banks enjoyed heavy support. Royal Bank of Scotland, up 61p at 931p, led the pack with some prepared to bank it will feature in a financial deal.

Standard Chartered was another in the bid frame. The shares gained 38p to 673p, building on last week's flurry, when heavy buying was apparent. Standard has had a poor run since the Asian crisis developed. The shares have come down from a 1,081.5p peak hit last summer. The theory abounds that a predator plans to take advantage of the under-performance.

Other financials buoyed by bid hopes included General

Accident and Norwich Union. Barclays, despite a bigger than expected £340m loss on BZW, managed a 41p gain to 1,836p, a peak.

But Halifax and Woolwich, which have been strong on speculative buying, had, for them, rather quiet sessions with Halifax up 6p at 899p and Woolwich 3p at 388p.

Telecoms, another area where mega-mergers are expected, featured Cable & Wireless with a 37p advance to 619p and BT, the subject of frenzied buying two weeks ago on corporate stories, up 9.5p to 594.5p.

Rolls-Royce, one of the overseas earners weighed down by sterling's strength and the turmoil in the tiger markets, climbed 6.5p to 213.5p on hopes that the 29.5 per cent ceiling on foreign shareholdings is about to be lifted. British Aerospace, which endures a similar ownership restriction, rose 10p to 1,600p. BA's score from the Government's decision to pump £123m towards the design and development of a new range of Airbus Industrie airliners.

The ceiling, which has caused particular discomfort to Rolls, with foreigners forced to sell shares, is expected to be raised to 49.9 per cent or perhaps abolished altogether.

Micro Focus, the computer

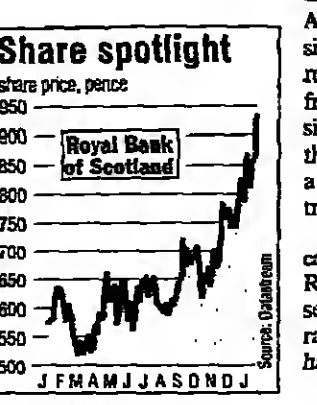
group, harcored 157.5p to 2,895p on reports of a deal with Microsoft.

Bass, down 26p to 944p, and Ladbrokes, off 6p to 290p, were hit by second thoughts about a costly bid battle for Inter-Continental Hotels. BSKYB, interim figures today, lost 19.5p to 342p. Profits are expected by up to £9m lower at around £125m and the market is anxious about possible delays in the digital television roll-out.

Gibbs Mew, once a brewer, now a pub owner, jumped 52p to 308.5p on signalled bid talks; pubs chain JD Wetherspoon lost 15p to 277.5p on profit downgrades.

Retailer La Senza added 8.5p to 25.5p on discussions with "a number of parties". Tele-Cine Cell, on a bid approach, gained 4.5p to 61p.

Phytopharm continued to draw strength on licence hopes for its drugs-from-plants.



TAKING STOCK

GBE International, the engineer known for its tobacco equipment, added 3.5p to 27.25p as a shake-up produced a new chairman and chief executive. Graham Walker, a former deputy chairman of Safeway, takes over as chairman and Michael Jenkins becomes chief executive. Roger Spry, a consultant to tobacco giant Philip Morris, will be responsible for GBE's tobacco side.

There are suggestions of corporate action at Wickes, the building materials group. The shares are riding at 290p, encouraged by some lumpy lines of stock changing hands.

Richards, suspended in July, returned at 57.5p, compared with the 55p placing which raised £4.4m. The former engineer now embraces Instrument Technology and is a maker of components for vacuum container systems. It will be renamed Univac.

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Alcoholic Beverages	25.50	24.50	25.50	25.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
25.50	24.50	25.50	25.50	25.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
25.50	24.50	25.50	25.50	25.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Banks, Merchant	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Banks, Retail	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Diversified Industrials	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Breweries Pubs & Rests	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Building/Construction	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Chemicals	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Engineering	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Food	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Health Care	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Household Goods	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Insurance	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Media	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Oil	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Pharmaceuticals	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Property	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Telecoms	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Utilities	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Transport	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Waste	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Food	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Food	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Food	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Food	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	High	Low	Stock	Price	Chg	YTD	P/E	Div
Food	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

12 week	24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50
24.50	23.50	24.50	24.50	24.50	0.50	0.50	10.00	0.50

As big companies get bigger, consumers should think small

HAMISH MURRAY
ON WAYS TO
COUNTER THE
CONCENTRATION
OF POWER

How big does a company need to be - and what determines the appropriate size in different industries?

In some cases there is a clear answer. For civil aircraft there is only room for two companies in the world, Boeing and Airbus. The scale of investment in a new product and the commercial risks involved mean that only two companies can make a living. In fact only one can really make a living, for were it not for subsidies from European taxpayers Airbus almost certainly could not be a credible challenge to Boeing.

That is probably the most extreme example of corporate concentration in the world, though some might argue that the position of Microsoft (by coincidence, also based in Seattle, headquarters of Boeing) was equally extreme.

At the other extreme there is, well, a colleague volunteered hairdressing, which was a better example than anything I could come up with. In between comes the vast mass of other activities from motor manufacturing, to accountancy, to banking, to airlines and so on. In this great in-between area

comes pharmaceuticals. Ten years ago there were British companies called Glaxo and Wellcome and Beecham and now these three are to be stirred into the giant pot with the US SmithKline. Result: on some measures the world's third largest company. Yet despite its size, the merged group would only have about 7 per cent of the world market in prescription drugs. The pharmaceutical companies industry is not particularly concentrated compared with many others; the companies are large because the industry is large.

To see this, compare the top ten pharmaceutical companies with an industry where the structure is more settled, the motor manufacturers (see graphs). True, the basis is slightly different because one is in money terms and the other in units, but in the case of pharmaceuticals the largest player at present is only twice the size of number 10 and the merged giant would only be three times, whereas in cars the ratio is five to one.

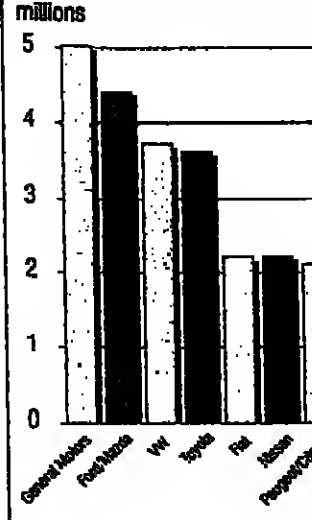
Will the motor manufacturing model become the standard for most industries? Certainly the urge to merge is so powerful at the moment among accountancy firms, airlines, banks - to start at the beginning of the alphabet - that there is the slightly alarming prospect that many industries which still have sufficient players to ensure reasonable competition between them will be sucked into becoming oligopolies.

How far this trend runs will depend partly on regulation - it is possible, at a price, to keep companies apart - but more on the fundamental economics of different businesses. To what extent will all world business become more like civil aircraft and to what extent will it remain more like hairdressing?

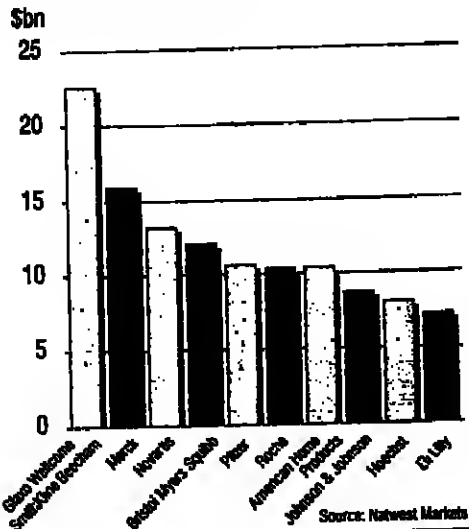
There are at least five forces for concentration, but there are also at least five pushing in the opposite direction. The five in favour of concentration are:

The world's top ten...

Car production companies millions



Pharmaceutical sales \$bn



- the growth of cross-border trade, for as world trade is increasing faster than world growth, countries are becoming more specialised in their output;
- the growing importance of global brands, a function of the globalisation of media and information;
- the growing size of commercial risks;
- the costs imposed by government regulation (it is easier for large firms to cope with these than small);
- investor preferences, as funds tend to seek to place assets in large funds.

That might seem a pretty overwhelming broadside, but the game is not entirely one-sided, for ranking against these are:

- the surge of information as a result of the internet, which cuts the entry cost for many small businesses by allowing them to sell to a global market, and allows purchasers to track them down;
- the need for greater specialisation of function, which forces large groups to sub-contract more and more of their activities;
- the growth of services (including hairdressing), many of

which cannot be traded across national borders, in relation to manufacturing (including aircraft), which will inevitably be traded across borders;

- growing consumer preferences for exclusivity in both goods and services, which will enable specialist providers to sustain much higher margins than mass producers;
- the growing importance of performers (sports and film stars, investment bankers, celebrity lawyers, and so on) in relation to executives.

The second list may not at the moment be as convincing as the first. I suspect that the forces for concentration have still quite a long way to run, but the game is not entirely one-sided. For those of us who are concerned about the concentration of power that seems to be taking place, here are three simple ways we can, individually and collectively, counter it.

One is to use our own purchasing power to favour smaller enterprises. For example, we should shop, where practical, at local stores rather than the supermarket chains. We should try and travel on smaller airlines. If our bank or building society

is taken over by a larger one, we should move the account. We should avoid going to chain restaurants - and so on.

Second, we should encourage government not to load regulations on companies, as these almost invariably benefit the large ones. Large groups can afford the specialists to tackle the bureaucrats; small cannot.

Third, if we are working for a large group we should not use the financial power of that group to put pressure on small suppliers - for example, by that common trick of delaying payment of invoices.

These limited measures may seem poor defence against the power of concentration. But all economic change is at the margin: quite small changes in the pattern of spending or the way consumers make their choices have cumulatively large impact. What is happening in pharmaceuticals is one large industry catching up with the typical global structure of other industries. There are other forces, less visible, encouraging people to spend more of their income on goods and services which the multinationals will never provide - including hairdressing.

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

JOHN WILLCOCK



Michael Hale is stepping down as chairman and chief executive of GBE International, the Andover-based manufacturer of equipment for the tobacco industry, after having completed his role as "company doctor" to the troubled group.

Mr Hale took the axe to costs and raised £6m in new capital last summer, getting rid of the loss-making packaging and environmental purification businesses. He is making way for Graham Walker, the new executive chairman, who is best known as the former deputy chairman of Argyll Group. Mr Walker owns 3.9 million GBE shares representing 4.3 per cent of the issued share capital.

Michael Jenkins joins GBE as chief executive, having come from Delta Group, and Roger Spry, a long-term employee at Phillip Morris, competes the team as executive director for the development of GBE's tobacco business. Mike Forder, GBE's financial director, survives the reshuffle, and the company is expected to make around £2.5m profits this year.

Is Simon Preston, chairman of the small but distinguished City FR company Financial Public Relations, going to commit a heinous family sin and sell out to the French? He would never be forgiven if he did, as he is a direct descendant of Lord Nelson, who of course gave the French and Spaniards a sound thrashing at Trafalgar.

No takeover of Financial Public Relations is immediately in the offing, but two French FR firms are reported to have made contact. And Mr Preston, together with managing director Murdoch Macdonald, do not deny a sale to a third party is possible.

Times have been tough for Financial Public Relations, founded in 1966, after it parted company with its longest standing client, General Accident, at the beginning of last year.

Nelson would have been happier with the Centre for Economic Policy Research

(CEPR), the London-based think tank founded in 1983 which this week trumpeted its European supremacy. Anthony Loehnis, the CEPR's chairman, declared that "the Centre now plays the leading role in policy-related research in Europe".

The occasion for the tub-thumping was a reorganisation in which Richard Portes, founding director of CEPR, becomes president. Stephen Yee moves up from deputy director to chief executive officer, while Mathias Dewatripont becomes part-time research director. The Centre now enjoys the support of all European central banks, the Bank for International Settlement and the European Monetary Institute.

Peter Horrocks, senior insolvency partner at lawyers Lovell White Durrant and the leading legal expert working on the six-year-old BCCI liquidation, is set to leave the firm this October, having been a partner since 1975.

"I need a change. I've been in the law for 34 years, and with Lovells for 28 years. When you've worked that long as an adviser you begin to feel that you'd like to be the principal, to be making the decisions for a change," says Mr Horrocks.

Eager for a new challenge, Mr Horrocks says he is thinking about several possibilities and would be happy to receive an offer. One idea of his is that the current state of mega-mergers between the big accountancy firms, which should reduce them from the Big Six to the Big Four, will produce an opportunity to form a new niche player, perhaps an insolvency practice made up of both lawyers and accountants.

"On the other hand I might become a company doctor, through a chairmanship," he adds.

Whatever his new career path, Mr Horrocks reckons there will be plenty of work to do for receivers and liquidators. "I do think there is another recession coming. The Asian crisis will have an effect, interest rates will rise - it will be enough to knock some companies over."

And when will we first see the signs of trouble? "June," he replies. You have been warned.

One of Mr Horrocks' accountancy colleagues is Chris Morris of Deloitte & Touche, who is a joint liquidator of both BCCI and Polly Peck. Asil Nadir's crashed electronics to fruit packing business empire.

Mr Morris has just switched solicitors for his multi-million legal action against Polly Peck's former auditors Stoy Hayward. Out go Dobb Lupton Alsop, in come Freshfields.

The UK company collapse figures may be at an all-time low at the moment, but Mr Morris is still being kept busy. His latest job has taken him to Albania, to help sort out several of their notorious pyramid investment schemes. While the Albanian economy may be taking time to adjust to post-communist conditions, says Mr Morris, "the wine there is excellent".

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 month
UK	100.00	23.05	23.73
Australia	23.84	23.05	23.73
Canada	61.21	61.25	60.80
Denmark	13.50	13.51	13.51
ECU	15.95	15.95	15.95
France	6.55	6.55	6.55
Germany	2.36	2.36	2.36
Greece	47.15	47.15	47.15
Hong Kong	10.00	10.00	10.00
India	19.84	19.87	19.83
Italy	2.00	2.00	2.00
Japan	161.00	161.00	161.00
Malaysia	6.72	6.72	6.72
Mexico	13.94	13.94	13.94
Netherlands	3.54	3.54	3.54
New Zealand	2.75	2.75	2.75
Norway	3.00	3.00	3.00
Portugal	20.48	20.48	20.48
Saudi Arabia	6.90	6.90	6.90
Singapore	2.75	2.75	2.75
South Africa	25.40	25.40	25.40
Spain	166.27	166.27	166.27
Sweden	4.66	4.66	4.66
Switzerland	2.00	2.00	2.00
US	1.63	1.63	1.63

Other Spot Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 month
Argentina	16.37	16.37	16.37
Brazil	1.00	1.00	1.00
China	8.27	8.27	8.27
India	5.77	5.77	5.77
Japan	161.00	161.00	161.00
South Korea	19.84	19.84	19.84
Taiwan	166.27	166.27	166.27
Thailand	4.66	4.66	4.66
US	1.63	1.63	1.63

Interest Rates

Country	3 month	1 year	2 year	5 year	10 year
UK	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%
Germany	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
France	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Italy	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Spain	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Japan	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
US	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%

Money Market Rates

Country	3 month	1 year	2 year	5 year	10 year
UK	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%
Germany	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
France	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Italy	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Spain	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
Japan	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%
US	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%

Life Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. floor	Open
Long FR	May-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43
Short FR	May-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43
Long FR	Jun-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43
Short FR	Jun-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43

Life FTSE 100 Index Option

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. floor	Open
Long FR	May-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43
Short FR	May-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43
Long FR	Jun-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43
Short FR	Jun-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43

Industrial Metals

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. floor	Open
Long FR	May-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43
Short FR	May-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43
Long FR	Jun-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43
Short FR	Jun-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43

Precious Metals

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. floor	Open
Long FR	May-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43
Short FR	May-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43
Long FR	Jun-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43
Short FR	Jun-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43

Agricultural

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. floor	Open
Long FR	May-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43
Short FR	May-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43
Long FR	Jun-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43
Short FR	Jun-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43

Other Softs

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. floor	Open
Long FR	May-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43
Short FR	May-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43
Long FR	Jun-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43
Short FR	Jun-98	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Fund	Unit Price	Fund	Unit Price	Fund	Unit Price
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Fund	Unit Price	Fund	Unit Price	Fund	Unit Price
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Fund	Unit Price	Fund	Unit Price	Fund	Unit Price
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Fund	Unit Price	Fund	Unit Price	Fund	Unit Price
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Fund	Unit Price	Fund	Unit Price	Fund	Unit Price
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Fund	Unit Price	Fund	Unit Price	Fund	Unit Price
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00
AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00	AIM Growth Trust Ltd	25.00

The best investment decision you'll ever make

£2.95
On sale at all leading newsagents or call 01795 414936

www.bloomburg.com

01795 414936

01795 414936

01795 414936

01795 414936

01795 414936

01795 414936

01795 414936

Suspended jockeys booked for return

The sounding out by the Jockey Club of opinion in key sectors of the racing industry is likely to lead to the three suspended riders regaining their licences tomorrow, Richard Edmondson reports.

Two of the three jockeys suspended from racing following doping and race-fixing allegations may be back in action by the end of the week.

The growing feeling yesterday was that the Jockey Club is about to annul its verdict of last Wednesday, a suggestion nurtured by early bookings for Dean Gallagher and Leighton Aspell, Jamie Osborne, the third

man under suspicion, remains incapacitated by a wrist injury. Gallagher has already been pencilled in to ride Claudia Electric at Sandown on Saturday. "If Dean gets his licence back, he rides her," Claire Johnsey, the trainer, said yesterday. "I don't believe any of it because all he's done for us is try his best."

"He won on her first time out and would have a second time at Fontwell but she swallowed her tongue. I hope the Jockey Club sees sense and gives the licences back."

The venue for the second meeting between the jockeys, their solicitors and three members of the Jockey Club's Licensing Committee will be announced today. There will be no attempt to hold the meeting

at a secret location as last week. "That was rather exceptional and I think we were right to try to hold it out of the public glare," John Masse, the Jockey Club spokesman, said yesterday.

The Chairman on the bench, as before, will be Gurney Shepherd. The remaining two places will be filled from the five other members of the Licensing Committee, and it is not impossible that Philip Blacker, the former jump jockey, and David Gibson, a horse breeder, will again sit in judgement.

The Jockey Club originally asked the jockeys to present evidence to persuade that their licences should be returned. Now, they may not even have to do that.

Word from the Square - and for improbable plots Portman

has rivalled Albert this past week - is that Christopher Foster, the Club's Executive Director, is to recommend an early end to the suspensions.

The Jockey Club hastily withdrew the licences last week in the belief that they would be assuaging public opinion. They got it wrong. The reaction has been almost 100 per cent behind the riders. The Jockey Club is now prone to the belief that it is no longer in the driver's seat, but is as much in control as a drunk in the back of a taxi.

Foster was yesterday continuing to "take soundings" on what other sections of the racing community thought about the suspensions. Making such critical decisions based on market research rather than because of the Club's own concept of

what constitutes just and appropriate action seems an abdication of its responsibility as the disciplinary body. While the fate of the three riders hangs in the balance there is little doubt that the Jockey Club has managed to attract a great deal of bad publicity over their treatment of the jockeys.

The jockeys' lawyers are likely to argue tomorrow that a continuation of the suspensions would represent a restraint of trade. There might even be discussion of compensation. "Leighton would have ridden Monna Fort at Ayr, one of two winners he missed in three days," Gurney Masse, the jockey's agent, said yesterday. "That's cost him £2,000 and he needs to get back into action."

"The publicity is as impor-

tant as the money and if he's off any longer then others will replace him and it's not so easy to get back on the horses. I'm not going to pre-judge things but if he does get his licence back then there are rides available for him on Friday and Saturday. I hope common sense prevails."

A sixth person was arrested yesterday in connection with the swoop on racing. "A 34-year-old man voluntarily attended Charing Cross police station by arrangement with his solicitors and was arrested in connection with an inquiry into horse-doping and race-fixing," a Scotland Yard spokesman said. The man has been bailed to 29 April.

Much of the background to these arrests has yet to reach the public domain, and until charges are made a stench of



Aspell, James winners

uncertainty hangs over the sport. "The initial investigations were carried out by our security department and they continue to participate with the police in the ongoing investigation," John Masse said yesterday. "I'm not in full possession of the facts, but I'm sure there are other people in this building who are."

It might soon be time for those people to come out into the sunlight.

Big three fall in with Tote's Business plan

Some bookies thought that See More Business did not jump well enough at Cheltenham on Saturday to win a Gold Cup. Think again, said punters yesterday, Ian Davies reports.

It looks like the Tote got it right. After See More Business won the Pillar Chase at Cheltenham on Saturday, while other leading bookmakers were offering odds of up to 7-1 about See More Business for the Cheltenham Gold Cup, the Tote went 7-2. The other firms are slowly moving into line. William Hill yesterday cut See More Business from 6-1 to 9-2 for the Gold Cup and Coral now offer

a top-priced 5-1. That may not last long.

Punters will have more ideas what See More Business is up against on Sunday when Ireland's leading Gold Cup hopes, Dorcas Pride and Imperial Call, will face a small field in the Hennessy Gold Cup over three miles at Leopardstown. The pair were among only eight acceptors yesterday for the race. Go Ballistic and Hermes Harvest are the only British entries.

Dorcas Pride is a top-priced 8-1 for the Gold Cup with William Hill, while Imperial Call, who won the Hennessy in 1996 en route to victory in the Gold Cup, is generally available at the same price.

Martin Pipe trains six of yesterday's 23 confirmed entries for the Tote Bookmakers Sandown Handicap Hurdle on Sat-

urday. Pipe's Allegation heads the weights on 11st 10lb. Darydan, Big Strand - who merits attention after his eye-catching run at Kempton last time - Danjing, Runaway Pete and Harbour Island are Pipe's other entries. Mistinguet, who easily beat

very impressive oo Saturday and she's fine after the race so we are heading for Sandown. She's not very big but she's carried big weights before and it hasn't bothered her."

Jimmy FitzGerald, who won the race with Special Vintage (1989) and Traingini (1993 and 1996), will saddle Whip Hand. The trainer's son, Tim, said: "Whip Hand seems OK and is an intended runner."

Splendid Thyme, winner of his last three starts, is also a likely starter. He will renew rivalry with Jenny Piman's Princess, beaten two and a half lengths by Terry Casey's charge last time but 2lb better off at Sandown.

Champion Hurdle possibilities Grey Shot and Whiffa Sands are among the entry revealed yesterday for the Supreme

Novices' Hurdle at the Festival. The pair have been given the alternative option of running in the first race at the Festival by trainers Ian Balding and John Dunlop.

Pipe has also entered the 1996 Italian Derby winner Bahamian Knight in the Supreme Novices', in advance of his hurdling debut at Lingfield this Friday. The Irish entry for the Supreme Hurdle second his Song. Pipe has entered 17 for the Triumph Hurdle, headed by Rainwalk, the Final Junior Hurdle winner.

Yesterday's meeting at Plumpton was abandoned because of frost.

Punters will be relieved to hear that the Tote has increased its maximum pay-out to £500,000 from £250,000.

MUSSELBURGH

1.30 Norman Conquest
2.00 George Dillingham
2.00 Hobkirk
2.30 China King

GOING: Good (Good to Soft in places).
Slight wind over course with light breeze.
Course is 5m 5c of Edinburgh on A1, bus stop from Edinburgh station 5m. ADMISSON: 10p. 1st 10p. 2nd 5p. 3rd 2p. 4th 1p. 5th 1p. 6th 1p. 7th 1p. 8th 1p. 9th 1p. 10th 1p. 11th 1p. 12th 1p. 13th 1p. 14th 1p. 15th 1p. 16th 1p. 17th 1p. 18th 1p. 19th 1p. 20th 1p. 21st 1p. 22nd 1p. 23rd 1p. 24th 1p. 25th 1p. 26th 1p. 27th 1p. 28th 1p. 29th 1p. 30th 1p. 31st 1p. 32nd 1p. 33rd 1p. 34th 1p. 35th 1p. 36th 1p. 37th 1p. 38th 1p. 39th 1p. 40th 1p. 41st 1p. 42nd 1p. 43rd 1p. 44th 1p. 45th 1p. 46th 1p. 47th 1p. 48th 1p. 49th 1p. 50th 1p. 51st 1p. 52nd 1p. 53rd 1p. 54th 1p. 55th 1p. 56th 1p. 57th 1p. 58th 1p. 59th 1p. 60th 1p. 61st 1p. 62nd 1p. 63rd 1p. 64th 1p. 65th 1p. 66th 1p. 67th 1p. 68th 1p. 69th 1p. 70th 1p. 71st 1p. 72nd 1p. 73rd 1p. 74th 1p. 75th 1p. 76th 1p. 77th 1p. 78th 1p. 79th 1p. 80th 1p. 81st 1p. 82nd 1p. 83rd 1p. 84th 1p. 85th 1p. 86th 1p. 87th 1p. 88th 1p. 89th 1p. 90th 1p. 91st 1p. 92nd 1p. 93rd 1p. 94th 1p. 95th 1p. 96th 1p. 97th 1p. 98th 1p. 99th 1p. 100th 1p. 101st 1p. 102nd 1p. 103rd 1p. 104th 1p. 105th 1p. 106th 1p. 107th 1p. 108th 1p. 109th 1p. 110th 1p. 111th 1p. 112th 1p. 113th 1p. 114th 1p. 115th 1p. 116th 1p. 117th 1p. 118th 1p. 119th 1p. 120th 1p. 121st 1p. 122nd 1p. 123rd 1p. 124th 1p. 125th 1p. 126th 1p. 127th 1p. 128th 1p. 129th 1p. 130th 1p. 131st 1p. 132nd 1p. 133rd 1p. 134th 1p. 135th 1p. 136th 1p. 137th 1p. 138th 1p. 139th 1p. 140th 1p. 141st 1p. 142nd 1p. 143rd 1p. 144th 1p. 145th 1p. 146th 1p. 147th 1p. 148th 1p. 149th 1p. 150th 1p. 151st 1p. 152nd 1p. 153rd 1p. 154th 1p. 155th 1p. 156th 1p. 157th 1p. 158th 1p. 159th 1p. 160th 1p. 161st 1p. 162nd 1p. 163rd 1p. 164th 1p. 165th 1p. 166th 1p. 167th 1p. 168th 1p. 169th 1p. 170th 1p. 171st 1p. 172nd 1p. 173rd 1p. 174th 1p. 175th 1p. 176th 1p. 177th 1p. 178th 1p. 179th 1p. 180th 1p. 181st 1p. 182nd 1p. 183rd 1p. 184th 1p. 185th 1p. 186th 1p. 187th 1p. 188th 1p. 189th 1p. 190th 1p. 191st 1p. 192nd 1p. 193rd 1p. 194th 1p. 195th 1p. 196th 1p. 197th 1p. 198th 1p. 199th 1p. 200th 1p. 201st 1p. 202nd 1p. 203rd 1p. 204th 1p. 205th 1p. 206th 1p. 207th 1p. 208th 1p. 209th 1p. 210th 1p. 211st 1p. 212th 1p. 213th 1p. 214th 1p. 215th 1p. 216th 1p. 217th 1p. 218th 1p. 219th 1p. 220th 1p. 221st 1p. 222nd 1p. 223rd 1p. 224th 1p. 225th 1p. 226th 1p. 227th 1p. 228th 1p. 229th 1p. 230th 1p. 231st 1p. 232nd 1p. 233rd 1p. 234th 1p. 235th 1p. 236th 1p. 237th 1p. 238th 1p. 239th 1p. 240th 1p. 241st 1p. 242nd 1p. 243rd 1p. 244th 1p. 245th 1p. 246th 1p. 247th 1p. 248th 1p. 249th 1p. 250th 1p. 251st 1p. 252nd 1p. 253rd 1p. 254th 1p. 255th 1p. 256th 1p. 257th 1p. 258th 1p. 259th 1p. 260th 1p. 261st 1p. 262nd 1p. 263rd 1p. 264th 1p. 265th 1p. 266th 1p. 267th 1p. 268th 1p. 269th 1p. 270th 1p. 271st 1p. 272nd 1p. 273rd 1p. 274th 1p. 275th 1p. 276th 1p. 277th 1p. 278th 1p. 279th 1p. 280th 1p. 281st 1p. 282nd 1p. 283rd 1p. 284th 1p. 285th 1p. 286th 1p. 287th 1p. 288th 1p. 289th 1p. 290th 1p. 291st 1p. 292nd 1p. 293rd 1p. 294th 1p. 295th 1p. 296th 1p. 297th 1p. 298th 1p. 299th 1p. 300th 1p. 301st 1p. 302nd 1p. 303rd 1p. 304th 1p. 305th 1p. 306th 1p. 307th 1p. 308th 1p. 309th 1p. 310th 1p. 311st 1p. 312th 1p. 313th 1p. 314th 1p. 315th 1p. 316th 1p. 317th 1p. 318th 1p. 319th 1p. 320th 1p. 321st 1p. 322nd 1p. 323rd 1p. 324th 1p. 325th 1p. 326th 1p. 327th 1p. 328th 1p. 329th 1p. 330th 1p. 331st 1p. 332nd 1p. 333rd 1p. 334th 1p. 335th 1p. 336th 1p. 337th 1p. 338th 1p. 339th 1p. 340th 1p. 341st 1p. 342nd 1p. 343rd 1p. 344th 1p. 345th 1p. 346th 1p. 347th 1p. 348th 1p. 349th 1p. 350th 1p. 351st 1p. 352nd 1p. 353rd 1p. 354th 1p. 355th 1p. 356th 1p. 357th 1p. 358th 1p. 359th 1p. 360th 1p. 361st 1p. 362nd 1p. 363rd 1p. 364th 1p. 365th 1p. 366th 1p. 367th 1p. 368th 1p. 369th 1p. 370th 1p. 371st 1p. 372nd 1p. 373rd 1p. 374th 1p. 375th 1p. 376th 1p. 377th 1p. 378th 1p. 379th 1p. 380th 1p. 381st 1p. 382nd 1p. 383rd 1p. 384th 1p. 385th 1p. 386th 1p. 387th 1p. 388th 1p. 389th 1p. 390th 1p. 391st 1p. 392nd 1p. 393rd 1p. 394th 1p. 395th 1p. 396th 1p. 397th 1p. 398th 1p. 399th 1p. 400th 1p. 401st 1p. 402nd 1p. 403rd 1p. 404th 1p. 405th 1p. 406th 1p. 407th 1p. 408th 1p. 409th 1p. 410th 1p. 411st 1p. 412th 1p. 413th 1p. 414th 1p. 415th 1p. 416th 1p. 417th 1p. 418th 1p. 419th 1p. 420th 1p. 421st 1p. 422nd 1p. 423rd 1p. 424th 1p. 425th 1p. 426th 1p. 427th 1p. 428th 1p. 429th 1p. 430th 1p. 431st 1p. 432nd 1p. 433rd 1p. 434th 1p. 435th 1p. 436th 1p. 437th 1p. 438th 1p. 439th 1p. 440th 1p. 441st 1p. 442nd 1p. 443rd 1p. 444th 1p. 445th 1p. 446th 1p. 447th 1p. 448th 1p. 449th 1p. 450th 1p. 451st 1p. 452nd 1p. 453rd 1p. 454th 1p. 455th 1p. 456th 1p. 457th 1p. 458th 1p. 459th 1p. 460th 1p. 461st 1p. 462nd 1p. 463rd 1p. 464th 1p. 465th 1p. 466th 1p. 467th 1p. 468th 1p. 469th 1p. 470th 1p. 471st 1p. 472nd 1p. 473rd 1p. 474th 1p. 475th 1p. 476th 1p. 477th 1p. 478th 1p. 479th 1p. 480th 1p. 481st 1p. 482nd 1p. 483rd 1p. 484th 1p. 485th 1p. 486th 1p. 487th 1p. 488th 1p. 489th 1p. 490th 1p. 491st 1p. 492nd 1p. 493rd 1p. 494th 1p. 495th 1p. 496th 1p. 497th 1p. 498th 1p. 499th 1p. 500th 1p. 501st 1p. 502nd 1p. 503rd 1p. 504th 1p. 505th 1p. 506th 1p. 507th 1p. 508th 1p. 509th 1p. 510th 1p. 511st 1p. 512th 1p. 513th 1p. 514th 1p. 515th 1p. 516th 1p. 517th 1p. 518th 1p. 519th 1p. 520th 1p. 521st 1p. 522nd 1p. 523rd 1p. 524th 1p. 525th 1p. 526th 1p. 527th 1p. 528th 1p. 529th 1p. 530th 1p. 531st 1p. 532nd 1p. 533rd 1p. 534th 1p. 535th 1p. 536th 1p. 537th 1p. 538th 1p. 539th 1p. 540th 1p. 541st 1p. 542nd 1p. 543rd 1p. 544th 1p. 545th 1p. 546th 1p. 547th 1p. 548th 1p. 549th 1p. 550th 1p. 551st 1p. 552nd 1p. 553rd 1p. 554th 1p. 555th 1p. 556th 1p. 557th 1p. 558th 1p. 559th 1p. 560th 1p. 561st 1p. 562nd 1p. 563rd 1p. 564th 1p. 565th 1p. 566th 1p. 567th 1p. 568th 1p. 569th 1p. 570th 1p. 571st 1p. 572nd 1p. 573rd 1p. 574th 1p. 575th 1p. 576th 1p. 577th 1p. 578th 1p. 579th 1p. 580th 1p. 581st 1p. 582nd 1p. 583rd 1p. 584th 1p. 585th 1p. 586th 1p. 587th 1p. 588th 1p. 589th 1p. 590th 1p. 591st 1p. 592nd 1p. 593rd 1p. 594th 1p. 595th 1p. 596th 1p. 597th 1p. 598th 1p. 599th 1p. 600th 1p. 601st 1p. 602nd 1p. 603rd 1p. 604th 1p. 605th 1p. 606th 1p. 607th 1p. 608th 1p. 609th 1p. 610th 1p. 611st 1p. 612th 1p. 613th 1p. 614th 1p. 615th 1p. 616th 1p. 617th 1p. 618th 1p. 619th 1p. 620th 1p. 621st 1p. 622nd 1p. 623rd 1p. 624th 1p. 625th 1p. 626th 1p. 627th 1p. 628th 1p. 629th 1p. 630th 1p. 631st 1p. 632nd 1p. 633rd 1p. 634th 1p. 635th 1p. 636th 1p. 637th 1p. 638th 1p. 639th 1p. 640th 1p. 641st 1p. 642nd 1p. 643rd 1p. 644th 1p. 645th 1p. 646th 1p. 647th 1p. 648th 1p. 649th 1p. 650th 1p. 651st 1p. 652nd 1p. 653rd 1p. 654th 1p. 655th 1p. 656th 1p. 657th 1p. 658th 1p. 659th 1p. 660th 1p. 661st 1p. 662nd 1p. 663rd 1p. 664th 1p. 665th 1p. 666th 1p. 667th 1p. 668th 1p. 669th 1p. 670th 1p. 671st 1p. 672nd 1p. 673rd 1p. 674th 1p. 675th 1p. 676th 1p. 677th 1p. 678th 1p. 679th 1p. 680th 1p. 681st 1p. 682nd 1p. 683rd 1p. 684th 1p. 685th 1p. 686th 1p. 687th 1p. 688th 1p. 689th 1p. 690th 1p. 691st 1p. 692nd 1p. 693rd 1p. 694th 1p. 695th 1p. 696th 1p. 697th 1p. 698th 1p. 699th 1p. 700th 1p. 701st 1p. 702nd 1p. 703rd 1p. 704th 1p. 705th 1p. 706th 1p. 707th 1p. 708th 1p. 709th 1p. 710th 1p. 711st 1p. 712th 1p. 713th 1p. 714th 1p. 715th 1p. 716th 1p. 717th 1p. 718th 1p. 719th 1p. 720th 1p. 721st 1p. 722nd 1p. 723rd 1p. 724th 1p. 725th 1p. 726th 1p. 727th 1p. 728th 1p. 729th 1p. 730th 1p. 731st 1p. 732nd 1p. 733rd 1p. 734th 1p. 735th 1p. 736th 1p. 737th 1p. 738th 1p. 739th 1p. 740th 1p. 741st 1p. 742nd 1p. 743rd 1p. 744th 1p. 745th 1p. 746th 1p. 747th 1p. 748th 1p. 749th 1p. 750th 1p. 751st 1p. 752nd 1p. 753rd 1p. 754th 1p. 755th 1p. 756th 1p. 757th 1p. 758th 1p. 759th 1p. 760th 1p. 761st 1p. 762nd 1p. 763rd 1p. 764th 1p. 765th 1p. 766th 1p. 767th 1p. 768th 1p. 769th 1p. 770th 1p. 771st 1p. 772nd 1p. 773rd 1p. 774th 1p. 775th 1p. 776th 1p. 777th 1p. 778th 1p. 779th 1p. 780th 1p. 781st 1p. 782nd 1p. 783rd 1p. 784th 1p. 785th 1p. 786th 1p. 787th 1p. 788th 1p. 789th 1p. 790th 1p. 791st 1p. 792nd 1p. 793rd 1p. 794th 1p. 795th 1p. 796th 1p. 797th 1p. 798th 1p. 799th 1p. 800th 1p. 801st 1p. 802nd 1p. 803rd 1p. 804th 1p. 805th 1p. 806th 1p. 807th 1p. 808th 1p. 809th 1p. 810th 1p. 811st 1p. 812th 1p. 813th 1p. 814th 1p. 815th 1p. 816th 1p. 817th 1p. 818th 1p. 819th 1p. 820th 1p. 821st 1p. 822nd 1p. 823rd 1p. 824th 1p. 825th 1p. 826th 1p. 827th 1p. 828th 1p. 829th 1p. 830th 1p. 831st 1p. 832nd 1p. 833rd 1p. 834th 1p. 835th 1p. 836th 1p. 837th 1p. 838th 1p. 839th 1p. 840th 1p. 841st 1p. 842nd 1p. 843rd 1p. 844th 1p. 845th 1p. 846th 1p. 847th 1p. 848th 1p. 849th 1p. 850th 1p. 851st 1p. 852nd 1p. 853rd 1p. 854th 1p. 855th 1p. 856th 1p. 857th 1p. 858th 1p. 859th 1p. 860th 1p. 861st 1p. 862nd 1p. 863rd 1p. 864th 1p. 865th 1p. 866th 1p. 867th 1p. 868th 1p. 869th 1p. 870th 1p. 871st 1p. 872nd 1p. 873rd 1p. 874th 1p. 875th 1p. 876th 1p. 877th 1p. 878th 1p. 879th 1p. 880th 1p. 881st 1p. 882nd 1p. 883rd 1p. 884th 1p. 885th 1p. 886th 1p. 887th 1p. 888th 1p. 889th 1p. 890th 1p. 891st 1p. 892nd 1p. 893rd 1p. 894th 1p. 895th 1p. 896th 1p. 897th 1p. 898th 1p. 899th 1p. 900th 1p. 901st 1p. 902nd 1p. 903rd 1p. 904th 1p. 905th 1p. 906th 1p. 907th 1p. 908th 1p. 909th 1p. 910th 1p. 911st 1p. 912th 1p. 913th 1p. 914th 1p. 915th 1p. 916th 1p. 917th 1p. 918th 1p. 919th 1p. 920th 1p. 921st 1p. 922nd 1p. 923rd 1p. 924th 1p. 925th 1p. 926th 1p. 927th 1p. 928th 1p. 929th 1p. 930th 1p. 931st 1p. 932nd 1p. 933rd 1p. 934th 1p. 935th 1p. 936th 1p. 937th 1p. 938th 1p. 939th 1p. 940th 1p. 941st 1p. 942nd 1p. 943rd 1p. 944th 1p. 945th 1p. 946th 1p. 947th 1p. 948th 1p. 949th 1p. 950th 1p. 951st 1p. 952nd 1p. 953rd 1p. 954th 1p. 955th 1p. 956th 1p. 957th 1p. 958th 1p. 959th 1p. 960th 1p. 961st 1p. 962nd 1p. 963rd 1p. 964th 1p. 965th 1p. 966th 1p. 967th 1p. 968th 1p. 969th 1p. 970th 1p. 971st 1p. 972nd 1p. 973rd 1p. 974th 1p. 975th 1p. 976th 1p. 977th 1p. 978th 1p. 979th 1p. 980th 1p. 981st 1p. 982nd 1p. 983rd 1p. 984th 1p. 985th 1p. 986th 1p. 987th 1p. 988th 1p. 989th 1p. 990th 1p. 991st 1p. 992nd 1p. 993rd 1p. 994th 1p. 995th 1p. 996th 1p. 997th 1p. 998th 1p. 999th 1p. 1000th 1p. 1001st 1p. 1002nd 1p. 1003rd 1p. 1004th 1p. 1005th 1p. 1006th 1p. 1007th 1p. 1008th

The Two Nations need Welsh to add a half to the brew

The 1998 Five Nations' Championship starts this weekend as Clive Woodward's New England travel to Paris to mix it with Jean-Claude Skrela's Even Newer France.

Chris Hewett, Rugby Union Correspondent, asks if the 10-week tournament will be done and dusted in 80 minutes flat, or whether the Celtic fringe can emerge from their twilight zone and confound the big two with some traditional fire and fury?

A smug, spiteful little joke is currently circulating through the bars and committee rooms of England's leading clubs and just for once, the punchline has nothing whatsoever to do with Cliff Brittle. It goes something like this: What's the difference between the Five Nations' Championship and the Monte Carlo Rally? Answer: Brian Ashton and Jim Telfer have more chance of winning the Monte Carlo Rally. On foot.

Cruel but true. To dignify Europe's annual international tournament with the word "five" is to invite an investigation from the Serious Fraud Squad, whose officers would not need an honours degree in sports science to realise that Ireland and Scotland are contenders only in the sense that Les Dawson was a concert pianist. If the Trades Descriptions Act covered rugby as well as soap powder and stereosystems, the organisers would be ordered to rename their product "The Two and a Half Nations".

Where on earth does the half come into it? Surely Les Tricolours and Les Rosblifs will condense the whole shooting match into a single frenzied set-to at the new Stade de France on Saturday afternoon? Possibly.



Jump to it: England's line-out prepares to scale the Five Nations heights during a training session at Twickenham yesterday

Photograph: Peter Jay

Probably even. But the stirrings on the far side of the Severn Bridge suggest that Wales – remember them? – are in there with a puncher's chance of slipping out of the cheap seats and joining the cosy little twosome in the box circle.

Not that Kevin Bowring, their cerebral coach, is doing himself any favours by continually ignoring Craig Quinell, the hottest second row in Britain. Unless Gareth Llewellyn, the most-capped lock in Welsh history and almost

certainly the luckiest, gives it some real humpity against the Italians in this weekend's non-championship Test at Llanelli, Quinell will surely face England at Twickenham in a little under three weeks' time.

There are any number of very good reasons why the Welsh should remain in damp squib mode. Rebuilding work at the Arms Park has forced them into temporary residence at Wembley – oddly, the Dragons will play more games in London than England over the course

of the tournament – while the even more urgent rebuilding work on their front five has been frustrated by injuries to Christian Loader and Spencer John, the two prime contenders for the loose-head role that has haunted Wales since the long-forgotten days of the one-dimensional but phenomenally strong Staff Jones.

And yet, Bowring's instinctive faith in the darting, side-stepping bundle of street theatre known as Arwel Thomas means that the Welsh

threequarter line, graced as it is by Gibbs and Bateman and Evans, will be given its freedom. Neil Jenkins, no great shakes as a full-back but one hell of a goal-kicker, is still around to put points on the board and if Scott Quinnell gets out of bed the right side, the back row will surely make the most of Martyn Williams' bravery on the floor.

Heaven knows, the championship needs the boys in full bloom once again. It is fashionable in this professional age

to dismiss the romance of the Five Nations as so much woolly-headed waffle, to reduce rugby to a laboratory print-out of pounds, ounces and tackle counts and forget all about the individual flashes of derring-do that make the tournament required viewing, even down south in Cape Town and Auckland. The Welsh bring sentiment, nostalgia and dripping emotion to the equation. In its absence, the fare can be as dry as dust.

Particularly now that the

Irish and Scots are down on their uppers, the Big Issue salesmen of rugby's international community. Lansdowne Road, so often stained red with the blood of visiting forwards, is no more than a picnic venue for bigger, richer, more professional opponents and while the French continue to view Murrayfield with deep mistrust, they could field two second-string sides good enough to deal with Jim Telfer's rag-tag collection of dispirited lightweight.

It is 13 years since Ireland bagged a Five Nations title and not even the most Guinness-fuelled patriot in Limerick expects them to claim one in the next 13. The Scots have fared rather better, completing a famous Grand Slam in 1990 and going close to two more in 1995 and 1996 before having their pips squeezed by superior English packs. But there has been a poverty of recent performance from both nations that brackets them together. Professionalism has skinned them alive, left them for dead. They are yesterday's men.

Assuming, then, that the Welsh are capable of only one rewriting of the form book rather than two, which of the big guns will avoid the banana

FIVE NATIONS FIXTURES

7 Feb	France v England	(Paris)
	Ireland v Scotland	(Dublin)
21 Feb	England v Wales	(Twickenham)
	Scotland v France	(Murrayfield)
7 Mar	France v Ireland	(Paris)
	Wales v Scotland	(Wembley)
21 Mar	Ireland v Wales	(Dublin)
22 Mar	Scotland v England	(Murrayfield)
4 Apr	England v Ireland	(Twickenham)
8 Apr	Wales v France	(Wembley)

skin? England are favourites to take the title, but only just. They are more settled than the French in most areas – second row, back row, half-back, midfield – and go into this week's match with the confidence of men who, last time out, took a great New Zealand side to the cleaners for 20 wonderful minutes and then climbed off the canvas to frighten them again at the death.

But in one very important sense, England deserve to take nothing from this championship apart from a big fat zero. Their refusal to ratify Italy's long overdue appearance at the high table of European rugby was and remains arrogant, supercilious and downright illogical. If they are made to pay for their pomposity by one or more of their opponents over the next two and a half months, a form of justice will be seen to be done.

ENGLAND

Clive Woodward insists that he has one priority and one only – namely, to build a team capable of lifting the Webb Ellis Trophy at next year's World Cup – and, if it means taking a painful step backwards in order to accomplish two in the right direction, he will happily pay the price. Such is his current standing with the English rugby public that while he emerged from last autumn's four-Test SANZA series without a win, he also emerged without a smidgen of smelly stuff sticking to his red rose blazer.

How long the honeymoon lasts is not entirely dependent on this weekend's match in Paris. Woodward can afford a narrow defeat there and still talk persuasively about progress. But any defeat by the Celts will leave him exposed to the slings and arrows of sporting fortune, especially as he possesses enviable strength in all areas of his squad.

All that is, except the front row, which must be giving him nightmares. The Springbok pairing of Os du Randt and Adrian Garvey crucified their opponents at Twickenham in November and there is plenty of smart money on Christian Calitano and Frank Tounaie doing something similar on Saturday.

England have the best back five in the championship, a posse of quality scrum-halves and a dream ticket in midfield now that Jeremy Guscott is back on board. If the front row goes belly-up, though, the rest counts for nothing.

Player to watch: Will Greenwood

FRANCE

What on earth are they doing, dropping Marc dal Maso from their front row? The Agen hooker was one of the sensations of last season's victorious Five Nations campaign and, together with Christian Calitano and Frank Tounaie, he would have been an even-money favourite to reduce England's front row to rubble this weekend. Instead, the French selectors have handed the No 2 shirt and the captaincy to the unknown Rafael Ibanez.

Still, the French look pretty useful, even without Abdel Benazzi's incomparable presence in the back five of their scrum. Their flankers, Philippe Benetton and Olivier Magne, are right up there with the English thoroughbreds and if Thomas Castaignède catches fire at outside-half, he could bring the Stade de France down almost before the builders have finished putting it up.

The question, as ever, surrounds the state of the French psyche, which is more complex and very nearly as baffling than a Marcel Proust paragraph. As we saw in Bordeaux on Saturday, the Brive contingent of Lameison, Carbonneau and Magne can freeze up on the big occasion. Stéphane Glas has been known to betray his immense talent as an attacking centre, Fabien Pelous may not pack sufficient punch at lock and Thomas Llorentz is a new boy at No 8. All in all, quite a challenge for a rookie captain.

Player to watch: Christian Calitano

IRELAND

The Irish hierarchy moved in for Brian Ashton a matter of hours before Jack Rowell, then England's coach, suggested he might find an opening for his old Bath confrère. How Ashton must wish he had gone shopping or popped along to the bookies that morning, for had he not been at home to take the fatal phone call from Dublin, he would probably be Clive Woodward right now.

It is almost laughably ironic that Ashton, who ranks alongside Pierre Villepreux as the most visionary and inventive backs coach in Europe, does not have a back division worthy of the name. The Irish threequarters will tackle – they always do – but the problems tend to start when the opposition relinquishes the ball. Short of a cutting edge in midfield and genuine gas out wide, the threequarters are also hampered by a lack of control at half-back. In short, it's a no-no.

There is better news up front, even though Jeremy Davidson, such a central figure in last summer's Lions triumph, is long-term injured. Malcolm O'Kelly could develop into one of the great Irish second rows, Paul Wallace is a crafty survivor on the tight head and David Corkery a handful on the blind-side flank.

However, Ashton has decided against giving Newcastle's Ross Nesdale a start at hooker in the opener with Scotland – a move he may live to regret – and Eric Miller's inconsistency remains a worry.

Player to watch: Malcolm O'Kelly

SCOTLAND

The nightmare scenario for the Scots is if the opposition manage to find their way to the ground. If they lose in Dublin this week – and their inability to field a competitive pack is far more of a problem than Ireland's unsuccessful search for a back division – they may well be whitewashed for the first time since 1978. Certainly, it is difficult to see them beating the Welsh at Wembley, let alone England or France on their own soil.

Jim Telfer's return as coach should at least ensure a whole-hearted effort from his pack, but there is no escaping the paucity of genuine international talent in all areas of the scrum. The absence of Tom Smith, an important contributor to the Lions in South Africa, has reduced Scotland's set-piece potential to something approaching zero and, with Rob Weirwright off the boil, Telfer cannot even rely on the hard-nut bandy traditionally associated with back-row units of the tartan persuasion. Finlay Calder, where are you now?

Besides, eight days is hardly long enough to boil an egg in rugby, let alone mould a side to Test pitch. Telfer is a superb forward coach and even though he has no time to play with, he can make a degree of progress by imposing a sergeant-majorish, back-to-basics regime on his disconsolate charges and insist that they re-acquaint themselves with the fundamental drills. It is, though, a damage limitation job.

Player to watch: Hard to find one.

WALES

We see it every year, the distant half-light of the new dawn breaking over the valleys. And every year, the darkness descends so suddenly and so completely that the long-suffering Welsh supporters have difficulty finding their way from the Arms Park to the pub. Last season, the reversal in fortunes was particularly unbearable: a 30-point victory at Murrayfield, followed two weeks later by a one-point home defeat at the hand of the Irish. Heartbreaking, crazy, downright criminal.

Yet the expectation never fades and this year, Kevin Bowring has an outside chance of fulfilling the desires of a true rugby nation. Wales have the most potent back division in the championship, a combustible mixture of innovation and pragmatism, of physical presence and elusive genius. All Bowring needs to do is work out a fast-track method of giving Rob Howley, Arwel Thomas and company the oxygen of possession.

It has been ever thus these last few years, for the Welsh pack has frightened no-one. Even now, they have problems at prop and, less obviously but equally worryingly, at the line-out. However, England's front row is not what it was and when the two sides meet at Twickenham, the set-piece confrontation could be the most even for the best part of a decade. The Welsh will still find it hellishly difficult at HQ, but three wins from four is not out of the question.

Player to watch: Allan Bateman

It is folly to begin the season with its crucial encounter

The bookies are making England favourites to win the Five Nations' Championship at 13-8 on. Then come France at 13-8, Wales at 14-1, Scotland at 25-1 and Ireland at 40-1. It seems to me that England are over-priced, France under-priced, Wales a good bet likewise and Ireland under-priced in relation to Scotland.

If Wales were playing their home matches at the old National Stadium instead of at Wembley, I would have fancied them to bring off a surprise, even with their somewhat makeshift pack. As things are, I agree, both with the bookies and with Jonathan Davies in the *Independent* on Sunday, that the real contest is between France and England, as it has been throughout the 1990s.

I also agree with Davies that in a commercial age – indeed, in any age – it is folly to begin the international season with what will almost certainly prove to be its crucial encounter.

There are two ways of approaching the completion of these fixtures. One is to revert to the traditional order, where-

by France played Scotland, for instance, on the first Saturday of the new year, and the other countries similarly followed their hallowed pattern. The other way is to take account of current form (by which I mean form over roughly a five-year span) and to save up what look like being the decisive matches for the last weekend.

For this season, I have to remind myself, even if I do not have to remind my readers, Five Nations matches are being played on Sundays as well as on Saturdays. But in a fashion typical of the organisation of rugby union football, the pattern is not being imposed consistently and seems to have no rhyme or reason about it.

Thus on Saturday there are three internationals (one of them the friendly between Wales and Italy at Llanelli) but there are none on the Sunday. There is a similar pattern on Saturday 7 March. Yet on Saturday 4 April England play Ireland at Twickenham, leaving Wales to play France at Wembley on the Sunday.

Oddly, I have the feeling



ALAN WATKINS

that Wales may win this match, if Kevin Bowring can pick the right team. For the game with Italy he has picked the correct backs apart from Gareth Thomas on the left wing.

I have nothing against Thomas, except that an injustice has manifestly been done to Nigel Walker. He was Wales' best player against New Zealand at the same stadium, and saved several tries. He is, I am afraid, the victim of prejudice: not colour prejudice – certainly not – but that prejudice which works against players who have come to the game relatively late in life and also happen to be extremely fast.

The wisecracks always say in these circumstances that they are "not sure about his defence" even though his defence is exemplary, as it is with Walker. Both Andrew Harriman of Harlequins and Simon Davies of Swansea were insufficiently recognised by their countries (in Davies' case, he was not recognised at all) on this spurious ground.

Earlier I mentioned the makeshift aspect of the Welsh forwards. There are four forwards in the Allied Dumbor Premier Division who are arguably the superiors of the players Bowring has chosen: John Davies and Craig Quinell of Richmond, and Nathan Thomas and Richard Webster of Bath, though Thomas is a substitute.

Admittedly Davies and Webster are getting on a bit, even though Webster did sterling work for Bath at Bordeaux. The younger Quinell is not the most accomplished line-out performer I have ever seen either. But with the other exports that really have been chosen, Barry Williams, Gareth Llewellyn and Scott Quinnell,

they would undoubtedly strengthen the pack. The time when the Welsh selectors could afford to turn up their noses at players turning out for English clubs has long passed.

From what I have seen in France, the standard of top English club rugby is higher than anything regularly available there as well. And Clive Woodward has been more level-headed in his selections for Saturday's match than Pierre Villepreux and Jean-Claude Skrela seem to have been with theirs, despite some silly, unnecessary teases on Woodward's part last week.

Accordingly Jeremy Guscott duly returns, and quite right too. Woodward has kept the pack that held New Zealand, with the enforced substitution of Mark Regan for Richard Cockeril.

The most risky French play is to play Thomas Castaignède, now of Castres, at outside-half, when what he is naturally is an attacking centre. But, illogically, I still think France will win, and am backing them to take the Championship as well.

Christophe Lameison, the Brive kicker who was France's match-winner against England at Twickenham last year, could be left out for the confrontation between the sides in their Five Nations' Championship at the Stade de France outside Paris on Saturday.

There is no questioning his ability – what worries France's backs guru, Pierre Villepreux, is the centre's mental state after missing a potentially decisive kick in his club's stunning defeat by Bath in the Heineken Cup final on Saturday. He suggested yesterday that Lameison "may not be mentally up to it".

Lameison, who scored 18 of France's points as they came from behind to beat England 23-20 last year on their way to the grand slam, was devastated after Saturday's defeat.

Should the French selectors decide to drop him, then Thomas Castaignède would play at centre with the goal kicking duties and David Aucagne at stand-off.

Villepreux said the match with England would prove a huge test particularly for the younger players in a fresh

French team under a new captain, the hooker Rafael Ibanez. "We're hoping for a successful fusion of the young players with the more experienced," Villepreux said.

Ireland have named the Garryowen scrum-half, Steve McIvor, among the replacements for Saturday's Five Nations game with Scotland in Dublin.

The 28-year-old, who won his two caps against Australia and Italy last season, replaces Niall Hogan after the London Irish half-back fractured his cheekbone playing for his club on Sunday.

The London Irish lock Gabriel Fulcher and Victor Costello, the St Mary's College No 8, have been switched from the Ireland A team to play Scotland A on Friday at Donnybrook to the senior squad's replacement panel.

Their places in the A side will be taken by Barb's Brian Cusack and David Erskine, of Sale, while the Bristol stand-off, Paul Burke, takes over the Ireland A captaincy from Fulcher.

Kevin Yates is expected to deny allegations of ear-biting

when he faces a Rugby Football Union disciplinary panel today. The Bath prop, capped twice, has been advised not to speak publicly about the notorious incident on 10 January, which left the London Scottish flanker Simon Fenn needing 25 stitches in his left ear. Yates, who has been suspended on full pay by Bath, has told colleagues and club officials he is innocent.

There are huge legal, financial and contractual implications for Yates, Bath and the Rugby Football Union and the case will be heard by a high-profile tribunal chaired by QC Michael Burton. He will be assisted by two RFU council members – Jonathan Dance, a solicitor, and Brian Balster, who is a retired assistant chief constable.

The RFU took over the inquiry by mutual agreement when the original intention was for Bath to continue their internal attempt to uncover the truth. London Scottish originally cited the entire Bath pack but reduced the citing to the front row before later eliminating Victor Ubogu and Federico Mendez, leaving only Yates to face a hearing.

هكذا من الأصل